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We trust that our subscribers can appreciate the circumstances that made this change inevitable and hope that they shall continue their patronage.

The revised subscription rates are also applicable to new subscribers enrolling from January, 1974, after July 1, 1974.

However, as a compensatory measure, we have restored the eight-page reduction in reading matter from this issue.

Manager,
PRABUDDHA BHARATA



Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXIX JULY 1974 No. 7

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA REMINISCES

'My mother was the very embodiment of simplicity. She did not understand anything of worldly matters and could not count money. Not realizing the danger of saying all things to all persons, she would give out whatever came to her mind to anybody and everybody. For this, people called her "silly". She also loved to feed one and all. My father never accepted a gift from a Sudra. He spent the greater part of the day in worship, Japa and meditation. When at the time of his daily prayers he would recite the invocation to Gayatri, "O shining One, O giver of boons come, etc." his chest would expand, become flushed and be bathed in tears. When not engaged in worship or other religious practices, he spent his time making flower garlands, with the help of thread and needle, to adorn Raghuvir. To avoid giving false evidence he gave up his parental homestead. The villagers paid him the respect and reverence due to a sage.'

*

'Once my father went to Gaya. There Raghuvir said to him in a dream, "I shall be born as your son." Thereupon my father said to Him: "O Lord, I am a poor brahmin. How shall I be able to serve You ? " "Don't worry about it", Raghuvir replied. "It will be taken care of."'

*

'In that part of the country (Kamarpukur) the boys are given puffed rice for lunch. This they carry in small wicker baskets, or, if they are too poor, in a corner of their cloth. Then they go out for play on the roads or in the fields, One day, in June or July, when I was six or seven years old, I was walking along a narrow path separating the paddy fields, eating some of the puffed rice which I was carrying in a basket. Looking up at the sky I saw a beautiful sombre thundercloud. As it spread rapidly enveloping the whole sky, a flight of snow-white cranes flew in front of that black cloud. It presented such a beautiful contrast that my mind wandered to far-off regions. Lost to outward sense, I fell down, and the puffed rice was scattered in all directions. Some people found

me in that plight and carried me home in their arms. That was the first time I completely lost consciousness in ecstasy.'

*

'During my younger days the men and women of Kamarpukur were equally fond of me. They loved to hear me sing. I could imitate other people's gestures and conversation, and I used to entertain them that way. The women would put aside things for me to eat. No one distrusted me. Everybody took me in as one of the family.

'But I was like a happy pigeon. I used to frequent only happy families. I would run away from a place where I saw misery and suffering.

'One or two young boys of the village were my close friends. I was very intimate with some of them; but now they are totally immersed in worldliness. A few of them visit me here now and then, and say, "Goodness! He seems to be just the same as he was in the village school!" While I was at school, arithmetic would throw me into confusion, but I could paint very well and could also model small images of the deities.

'I loved to visit the free eating-places maintained for holy men and the poor, and would watch them for hours.'

'I loved to hear the reading of sacred books such as the *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata*. If the readers had any affectations, I could easily imitate them and would entertain others with my mimicry.'

*

'The youngsters do not enjoy worldly people's company. Rakhal used to say, "I feel nervous at the sight of the worldly-minded." When I was first beginning to have spiritual experiences, I used to shut the doors of my room when I saw worldly people coming.

'As a boy, at Kamarpukur, I loved Ram Mallick dearly. But afterwards, when he came here, I couldn't even touch him. Ram Mallick and I were great friends during our boyhood. We were together day and night; we slept together. At that time I was sixteen or seventeen years old. People used to say, "If one of them were a woman they would marry each other." Both of us used to play at his house. I remember those days very well. His relatives used to come riding in palanquins. Now he has a shop at Chanak. I sent for him many a time; he came here the other day and spent two days. Ram said he had no children; he brought up his nephew but the boy died. He told me this with a sigh; his eyes were filled with tears; he was grief-stricken for his nephew. He said further that since they had no children of their own, all his wife's affection had been turned to the nephew. She was completely overwhelmed with grief. Ram said to her: "You are crazy. What will you gain by grieving? Do you want to go to Benares?" You see, he called his wife crazy. Grief for the boy totally "diluted" him. I found he had no stuff in him. I couldn't touch him.'

ONWARD FOR EVER!

We become wiser through failures. Time is infinite. Look at the wall. Did the wall ever tell a lie? It is always the wall. Man tells a lie—and becomes a god too. It is better to do something; never mind even if it proves to be wrong; it is better than doing nothing. The cow never tells a lie, but she remains a cow, all the time. Do something! Think some thought; it doesn't matter whether you are right or wrong. But think something! Because my forefathers did not think this way, shall I sit down quietly and gradually lose my sense of feeling and my own thinking faculties? I may as well be dead! And what is life worth if we have no living ideas, no convictions of our own about religion? There is some hope for the atheists, because though they differ from others, they think for themselves. The people who never think anything for themselves are not yet born into the world of religion; they have a mere jelly-fish existence. They will not think; they do not care for religion. But the disbeliever, the atheist, cares, and he is struggling. So think something! Struggle Godward! Never mind if you fail, never mind if you get hold of a queer theory. If you are afraid to be called queer, keep it in your own mind—you need not go and preach it to others. But do something! Struggle Godward! Light must come.

Vivekananda

A PERCEPTIONAL PARADOX FROM THE GĪTĀ

EDITORIAL

I

In his discerningly drawn profile of a man of steady wisdom, in the concluding quarter of the second chapter of the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa uses an apparent contradiction to bring out the polar difference between the perception of the ignorant and that of the illumined sage. After delineating many characteristics of a man of steady wisdom, Śrī Kṛṣṇa uses with great effect, in the sixty-ninth verse, this paradoxical mode of expression. 'In that which is night to all beings', he says, 'the man of self-control is awake; where all beings are awake, there is night for the sage (*muni*) who sees.' It must be obvious to everyone but the most obstinate fanatic that here Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not at all referring to the physical day and night. Nor does he mean by 'waking', the non-dreaming, non-sleeping state; nor by 'seeing', ocular perception. He is trying to clothe in our every-day vocabulary an ineffable fact of experience. And hence this striking paradox.

Fortunately, our traditional commentators and teachers have penetrated the paradox and revealed its mystical significance in the light of scriptural evidence and their own realizations. Śaṅkara, one of the greatest among them, clearly says that just as the day of others is night for nocturnal creatures, so is the ultimate Truth—though always present and shining—unknown to the ignorant who are not mindful of it. But to the wise one, who has awakened from the sleep of ignorance, the ultimate Truth is manifest like the day—ever bright, abiding, infinite, non-dual. Whereas the ignorant are awake to the every-day world of sense-perception and multiplicity, the wise man whose nescience has been destroyed is unable to see that multiplicity, at least in the way we do. And so this phenomenal world

is like a dark night to him. Śaṅkara here makes a significant observation about the nature of ignorant beings' perception. Their wakeful perception of this world, he says, is obtained with 'sleepy eyes' (*svapna-dṛśaḥ*) only. Students of modern physics will be able to appreciate the truth of this observation.

Madhusūdana-sarasvatī, another great Vedāntic commentator on the *Gītā*, in commenting on this verse says that to the unwise, the wisdom born of one's identity with Brahman is like a dark night. But the wise man is always awake to that truth. Though the ignorant are supposed to be awake in the world of multiplicity, yet their conduct in it is rather somnambulistic—affected as they are by the sleep of primal ignorance. This hazy waking perception is impossible for the wise man whose ignorance has been utterly shattered. Hence Madhusūdana quotes Sureśvara's *vārttika* (metrical commentary) on Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad*:

> 'If there be seen the operation of causal agents, verily, the pure Reality is not seen; and if the pure Reality is attained, there will be seen no operation of causal agents.'
>
> 'With reference to the ignorant and the knower of the Self, this relative world is like the crow's and the owl's night. "That which is night to all beings . . ."—thus the Lord Himself has declared [in the *Gītā*].'

Though Swami Vivekananda has not written any commentary on the *Gītā* in the traditional way, still he has thrown much light on it in many of his lectures and talks. In a series of four lectures on Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *Gītā*, delivered in California, Swamiji commented on this particular verse of the second chapter thus:

> 'Where is the world awake? In the senses. People want to eat and drink and have children, and then they die a dog's death. . . . They are always awake for the senses. Even their religion is just for that. They invent a God to help them, to give them more women, more money, more children—never a God to help them become more godlike! "Where the whole world is awake, the sage sleeps. But where the ignorant are asleep, there the sage keeps awake"—in the world of light where man looks upon himself not as a bird, not as an animal, not as a body, but as infinite spirit, deathless, immortal. Thus, where the ignorant are asleep, and do not have time, nor intellect, nor power to understand, there the sage is awake. That is daylight for him.'[1]

II

In the brightness of the sun's radiance, the nocturnal creatures see only darkness. That is because their visual apparatus is devised to receive only faint radiations of light. The powerful vibrations of the sun's radiance dazzle and blind them. Thus for these creatures, owing to lack of suitable visual perception, the day becomes the 'night'. It is similar to the human beings' perception of darkness in the ultraviolet region of the spectrum where abound powerful radiations such as the X-rays. But the 'darkness' amidst such powerful radiations is entirely due to the incapacity of our visual mechanism. This incapacity affects all the other senses and their master, the mind.

Now, Brahman or the ultimate Reality, the basis and stuff of this phenomenal universe, is—by the very fact of Its being absolute—imperceptible to the eyes and other senses and incomprehensible to the ordinary mind. Śrīdhara Swāmin, therefore, very rightly points out in his gloss on this verse of the *Gītā*, that the 'darkness' which hides the absolute Reality is in the minds of the ignorant beings themselves. The sage, on

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1 *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Dt. Pithoragarh, U.P.), Vol. I (1962) pp. 465-6.

the contrary, has subdued his senses, mastered his mind, and acquired an especial perceptive power that is not hamstrung by sensual limitations. He has as it were reached the sun, where the day and night of a non-self-luminous spinning satellite, namely the earth, have no meaning. Only this is to be borne in mind: that the 'sun' reached by the sage is in his own heart; and that is his Ātman, the ever-effulgent Reality which is identical with the supreme Reality. Brahman, as Gauḍapāda has described It, is 'birthless, sleepless, dreamless, nameless, formless, ever-effulgent, and omniscient'.[2] Śaṅkara in his luminous comments on this statement points out that non-perception of Brahman is the 'night', and perception of It, the 'day'. The cause of non-perception of the self-effulgent Brahman is the darkness of ignorance. In the case of the sage, that darkness is destroyed and so his day does not end. Contrarily, the ignorant are never free from this darkness and so live in a perpetual night.

The second statement in the verse—namely, 'where all beings are awake, there is night for the sage (*muni*) who sees'—is rather difficult to understand and unravel. This is evident from the fact that many translators and annotators have failed to explain it clearly. How the illumined sage sees the phenomenal universe cannot be that easily explained. Because the sage's vision has undergone a transformation of which the ordinary mind can hardly have even the least inkling. Ānandagiri—an advaitic teacher who has elucidated Śaṅkara's commentaries —and Madhusūdana-sarasvatī have shown sage-like insight in explaining this part of the verse. Ānandagiri says, 'To the all-renouncing sage from whom the primal ignorance has gone and who is experiencing the supreme Truth, the dualistic state is darkness.'[3] By 'dualistic state' is meant the mode of perception of the ignorant who have a formidable awareness of 'I' and 'you', 'this' and 'that', 'here' and 'there' and the whole range of duality and multiplicity wrought by space and time, and a basic ignorance. Just as a man with a blazing torch in his hand will fail to encounter darkness, so the man of wisdom is unable to perceive the phenomenal world as the ignorant do. To use another simile: the adult who has left behind childhood fails to experience the child's emotion and fascination for dolls—that is to say, the adult is in 'the dark' where the child sees 'light'. Similarly, the sage outgrows the ignorant man's perception and never again will be able to resume it.

Madhusūdana-sarasvatī, too, beautifully explains the sage's inability to see the world as the ignorant see it, and appropriately quotes the Upaniṣad: 'When there is something else, as it were, then one can see something. . . .' 'But when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one see and through what? . . .'[4]

In the *Gītā* there are several descriptions of the wise man's perception of the relative world, supplementing this utterance in the second chapter. At one place the wise man is said to see God in everything and everything in God, and consequently he is always in God's presence and God is ever in his awareness.[5] While characterizing the three kinds of knowledge according to the distinction of *guṇas* (qualities—*sattva, rajas*, and *tamas*: balance or wisdom, activity, and inertia), the *sāttvika* knowledge is said to

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2 अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नमनामकमरूपकम ।
सकृद्विभातं सर्वज्ञं... ।। *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*. III. 36.

3 परमार्थतत्त्वमनुभवतो निवृत्ताविद्यस्य संन्यासिनो द्वैतावस्था निशा ।

4 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad*, IV. iii. 30; v. 15. Also see: IV. iii. 22.

5 *Bhagavad-gītā*, VI. 30.

be that by which one indestructible Substance is seen in all beings, undivided in the divided.[6] For the ignorant, this creation is all divided, cut up, and utterly fragmented. But the wise see that all things are connected by a common source and ground. 'The knowledge of the wise man, who is all light,' asserts Gauḍapāda, 'is never related to any object.'[7] His is an all-embracing cosmic perspective which sees perfect unity in the utter diversity of the phenomenal world. 'Aṭṭâr, an eminent Persian Sufi mystic and poet of the twelfth century A.D., says this regarding the enlightened man: 'When the Sun shines upon him, the dust-bin of this world is changed for him into a rose-garden: the kernel is seen beneath the rind. No longer does the lover see any particle of himself, he sees only the Beloved: wheresoever he looks, he sees always His Face.'[8] What is meant by the wise man's night with respect to the relative world is his inability to see the 'dust-bin', because for him it has changed irrevocably into the 'rose-garden'.

Can the wise man be in ignorance of the details about individual objects which the physical sciences study? Yes, he can; and such ignorance will not detract even slightly from his sublime illumination. The sage knows for certain the clay from which all earthen pots, dolls and toys are made. He may be ignorant of the mechanism of the toy or the way a doll is put together. His transformed vision is so vast and cosmic that such minute details become utterly trivial and insignificant. In the famous dialogue, 'Milinda-pañha', between King Menander and his young Buddhist teacher Nāgasena, the King asked, 'Can a perfect man (such as the Buddha) be in error or make mistakes?' Nāgasena's answer was to this effect:

The perfect man can remain in ignorance of minor matters not in his experience, but he can *never* be in error as to what his insight has actually realized. He is perfect here and now. He knows the whole mystery, the Essence of the universe, but he may not know the mere external variations through which the Essence is manifested in time and space. He knows the *clay* itself, but has not had experience of every shape it may be wrought into. The perfect man knows the soul itself, but not every form and combination of its manifestation.[9]

III

Compared to many of the great prophets and incarnations, historic and prehistoric, Sri Ramakrishna seems to hold an advantage in that his life and teachings have come down to us in great detail and accuracy. Maybe because he lived very close to us in time; maybe because he had disciples and followers most of whom had received a modern education and believed in research and rational investigation, and in recording what they actually heard and saw. While hardly any details about the *sādhanā* (spiritual struggles) of most of the older prophets and incarnations are available, details of Sri Ramakrishna's *sādhanā* are in abundance. If we take even a cursory look at his life, struggles, and realizations, we get a substantiation of the 'perceptional paradox' presented by the *Gītā*.

When he took up the priestly duties in the Mother's temple at Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna's yearning for God gradually increased and became intense. At that time he was almost unconscious of the outer world. 'Oh, what a state of mind I passed through!' he reminisced later. 'When I first had that experience, I could not perceive the coming and going of day or night. People said I was insane. What else could they say?'[10]

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[6] ibid., XVIII. 20.
[7] *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, IV. 99.
[8] Margaret Smith: *The Persian Mystics—'Aṭṭâr* (John Murray, New York, 1932), p. 51.
[9] Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Vol. VIII (1959) pp. 16-17.
[10] 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1947), p. 168.

This indicates the stage of the struggling God-seeker when his mind turns violently away from the world and all its enjoyments. The aspirant wants to live in the inner world of the spirit, and the outer world of senses becomes almost dark to him. St. John of the Cross, one of the greatest of Christian mystics, speaks of the 'dark night' through which a soul seeking union with God has to pass. It is said to be a dark night, firstly because the soul has to deprive itself of all desire for worldly things, and this denial and deprivation is, as it were, a night to the senses of man. Secondly, the soul must travel to divine union by the path of faith which is as dark as night to the understanding. Thirdly, the destination, namely God, is like a dark night to the pilgrim soul. 'These three nights', he says, 'must pass through the soul—or, rather, the soul must pass through them—in order that it may come to Divine Union with God.'[11] Sri Ramakrishna successfully passed through them and attained God-vision.

His experiences of God-realization are many and varied. That his vision had undergone a fundamental transformation is evident by such statements as this:

> 'I would see God in meditation, in the state of samadhi, and I would see the same God when my mind came back to the outer world. When looking at this side of the mirror I would see Him alone, and when looking on the reverse side I saw the same God.'[12]

From this it is clear that his perception of the phenomenal world was entirely different from that of sense-bound people. This transformation naturally manifested itself in his dealings with the outside world, its objects, and persons. Ordinary people look upon gold and wealth as supremely covetable objects; for Sri Ramakrishna they were on a par with dust or clay-lumps. Worldly people look upon their life-partners from the viewpoint of physical attraction and enjoyment; in Sri Ramakrishna's eyes his own wife appeared as the Divine Mother of the Universe. He saw the whole creation, especially women, as the Divine Mother Herself. Most of his own relatives became as strangers to him, because they were not devotees of God. Strangers, who were sincerely devoted to God, became dearer to him than relatives. For meeting some of them, he used to yearn and shed tears. Ordinary people crave for name and fame and occult powers. In his eyes these were just rubbish and filth. Why will not the world call such a man 'insane'? Because he was not 'awake' to the world of senses as others were 'awake' to it, Sri Ramakrishna was ridiculed and slandered as the 'mad priest of Kali'.

It is said that God-vision destroys sleep altogether. In the case of Sri Ramakrishna this fact was very much in evidence. He once said, 'For six years these eyes remained wide open, not a wink of sleep visited them.'[13] Even later on, disciples who came and lived with him said that he slept hardly an hour or two out of the twenty-four. Nights were mostly spent in ecstatic communion with God and chanting of His names. Sri Ramakrishna was a sage the sky of whose heart was lit by the ever-bright sun of God, and so 'night' became an utter stranger to him. He was fond of singing this Bengali song describing the state of a man of perfect wisdom:

> 'My sleep is broken; how can I slumber any more?
> For now I am wide awake in the sleeplessness of yoga.

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[11] St. John of the Cross: *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (Tr. and ed. by E. Allison Peers, Image Books, Garden City, New York, 1962), p. 22.

[12] *The Gospel*, p. 506.

[13] *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, 2nd edition), p. 107.

O Divine Mother, made one with Thee
in yoga-sleep at last,
My slumber I have lulled asleep for
evermore.
A man has come to me from a country
where there is no night;
Rituals and devotion have all grown
profitless to me.'

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Dear—'[1]

'Why forget Durga ? Repeat, O my mind, the name "Durga",
In life and in death, O mind, do not give up the Mother's feet.'

Whatever the Lord does is for one's good—may He keep this conviction firmly rooted in the heart. . . .

Practise spiritual disciplines intensely. Indeed, circumstances will not be always favourable in everybody's case. Therefore, in whatever condition He may keep you, in that very condition you have to call on Him. For there is no other means of achieving spiritual welfare than the attainment of obedience to His will through the practice of uninterrupted remembrance of Him. One attains the highest good if one can become entirely His. This is the conclusive truth. Logical reasoning also supports this truth, and all saints are unanimous in this matter. The intelligent person remembers Him amidst all unfavourable conditions and thus goes beyond them all. . . .

Excepting the grace of the Lord there is no other final resource in this world. To the extent that a man can grasp this fact, to that extent he will be free of worry. Do not think that you are not near and dear to us because you are living at a distance from us. Distance and nearness are all affairs of the mind. Though living far, yet very near; again, though very near, still at a great distance! To be sure, you are always very close to us. . . .

The Lord alone knows where He is going to take me. Let Him take me wherever He wants; may He allow me to keep my mind at His lotus feet—this is the prayer. Whatever is the Lord's will, that alone will be fulfilled, and that undoubtedly is for our good. But the fact is, our mind does not grasp this and we do not have patience. There is no other way of getting peace than through faith. What He does is really for one's own good—if one doesn't have this understanding there won't be any peace in the heart. Happiness and sorrow, disease and bereavement, are inevitable in embodied life. These are bound to occur; but to think that what gives me happiness is good and what gives me affliction is bad—this understanding is not right. This is an extreme form of selfishness. May the Lord keep us unperturbed in happiness and sorrow, in disease and bereavement. Let not right undersanding be effaced from our heart under any circumstance. This is the one sincere prayer to Him. . . .

Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) has blessed you—your health will become

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[1] Date and place not obtainable.

all right this winter. Without a healthy body, any possibility of spiritual practices is a far cry. Therefore it is superfluous to say that you will make special efforts to keep the body free from illness.

What sort of Brahmacārins are you? Why are you so much concerned about the body? To grow, to decline, and finally one day to fall off—this is the very nature of the body. Within this body is One who never increases nor decreases. That alone you have to see.

You have offered yourselves at the feet of the Lord; therefore His is now the entire responsibility. He will surely get all things done. Becoming instruments in His hands, conduct yourselves in the path shown by Him—then there won't be any room for fear and worry. . . . There is no fear for those who have taken refuge in Him.

'Remain, O Brother, attached to Hari;
You will slowly reach the goal.'

In course of time everything will be all right. Don't worry or be flurried. I am directly visualizing in a divine way the amount of good work that will be done through the grace of the Lord from that place [Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras]. The Lord Himself does His own work and He is doing it; but then blessed are those whom He uses as His instruments. There is no end to our joy in that you have become a distinctive instrument in His hand and are able to do His work. May you every day perform the work dear to the Lord, make your own and others lives blessed, and thus become the possessor of the highest good: this is my very earnest prayer to Him. . . .

The Lord is getting His work done. He who is able enthusiastically to dedicate himself to this work will become blessed and fulfilled. May the Lord keep you all engaged in His work and thus make you blessed and fulfilled—this is my comprehensive prayer to Him.

He is all graciousness; He will do good and is doing it—if this faith remains firm, there is no need to look at anything else. May the Lord implant this attitude in your heart.

For this alone you all must pray to Him, for my sake:

'O Rāma, I am speaking the truth; I have no other desire in my heart.
And You are the indwelling Self of all (so You surely know my mind).
O Best of the line of Raghu, give me unwavering devotion (to You) and
and make my mind devoid of the blemishes of lust etc.'[2]

This prayer brings me the hope of complete peace within my heart: I feel as though, if this peace is completely achieved, the realization of perfection is very close at hand. If in our life this attitude is mastered, then immortality looks like a trifle. 'Being born, one has to die. Who is immortal, when and where?' But if one can achieve this conviction before dying, then alone does death become fruitful. No thought whatever for the body—is it not something great when one is established in this mood?

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[2] नान्या स्पृहा रघुपते हृदयेऽस्मदीये सत्यं वदामि च भवानखिलान्तरात्मा ।
भक्तिं प्रयच्छ रघुपुङ्गव निर्भरां मे कामादिदोषरहितं कुरु मानसं च ।। —Tulasīdāsa.

There is no way of understanding the sport of Mahāmāyā:

'She, the Divine Mother, the Mahāmāyā, forcefully drawing the minds of even the wise, throws them into delusion.'[3]

When that is the case [with the wise], what to speak of others? If one can always remain prayerful with folded hands, then alone is one safe. In this world the state of affairs is: 'The cow-dung cake burns and the cow-dung laughs'[4]—you have expressed it rightly. 'O Mother, if You do not protect, then there is no deliverance'—this indeed is the truth.... as it is the will of the Lord, so it will come to pass. If one can keep one's mind absorbed in His holy feet, then one need not worry much about external things. His compassion alone is the final help in this regard.

Be prayerful always. Continuously offer to the Lord all your inmost thoughts. He alone is one's very own—if this attitude becomes firm within, then no fear or worry remains. Gradually He reveals everything.

Ever your well-wisher,
SRI TURIYANANDA

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[3] ज्ञानिनामपि चेतांसि देवी भगवती हि सा ।
वलादाकृष्य मोहाय महामाया प्रयच्छति ॥ —*Devī-māhātmyam*, I. 55.

[4] 'Cow-dung cake' has been dried and therefore is combustible, as compared to the (fresh) cow-dung.

RELIGION, SOCIALISM, AND SERVICE

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

What exactly is the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda for India and the world today? It will not be possible to deal with this subject in a short space. So I shall touch upon only some of its salient points.

Swami Vivekananda on his return from the West after the Parliament of Religions referred in most of his lectures from Colombo to Almora to one theme, and that was that the national ideal of this country is religion. Every nation has an ideal which shapes its life and when that is jeopardised for any reason the nation suffers. In India, the life of our nation is based on religion. Any attempt at changing over to a new ideal at the cost of the traditional one will mean the death of the nation. This ideal the nation chose thousands of years ago and it is not possible to alter it now just as it is not possible to reverse the current of the river Ganga back to the Himalayas and make it run in a new channel. 'After all', Swamiji says, 'it is not a bad choice.' For centuries the nation has held on to this ideal in weal and woe. If India is to rise again it will be only through religion and not through any other ideal, though there will be room for many other things as well like politics, economics, etc., but all within this framework of religion. So Swamiji says, 'Before flooding India with socialistic or political

ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas.' He also wanted that 'the most wonderful truths confined in our Upanishads, in our scriptures, in our Puranas must be brought out from the books, brought out from the monasteries, brought out from forests, brought out from the possession of selected bodies of people', so that everyone may know of them.

According to him one of the causes of the downfall of Inda was that the higher castes made a monopoly of the spiritual truths, which they kept among themselves and failed to share with the general masses. He was therefore hard sometimes on the higher castes for this selfishness. He declared, 'However much you may parade your descent from Aryan ancestors and sing the glories of ancient India day and night, and however much you may be strutting in the pride of your birth, you—the upper classes of India, do you think you are alive? You are but mummies ten thousand years old! It is among those whom your ancestors despised as "walking carrions" that the little of vitality there is still in India is to be found; and it is you who are the real "walking corpses".... Aye, on your bony fingers are some priceless rings of jewel, treasured up by your ancestors, and within the embrace of your stinking corpses are preserved a good many ancient treasure-chests.... Pass them on to your heirs, aye, do it as quickly as you can. You! merge yourselves in the void and disappear and let New India arise in your place. Let her arise—out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets. Let her emerge from the groves and forests, from hills and mountains.' He then assures us that no sooner would these great and strength-giving ideas reach the masses than a Renaissant India would emerge.

By religion, however, is not meant the common idea about it, viz., a set of beliefs, dogmas or even superstitions sanctified by priesthood or popular customs. Religion is realisation of the ultimate Truth. Swamiji says, 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more, or all of these and be free. This is the whole of religion.' According to Sri Ramakrishna different religions are but different paths to God-realisation, and he had realised this truth through direct experience. Even intellectually, if we scrutinise the various religions, we find that each of them prescribes only these four Yogas, with perhaps a stress on one or the other. So conversion from one religion to another is to be discouraged and each one is to rise higher and higher in spirituality by following his own religion and thus realise God.

Religion has to permeate all fields of national life—education, politics, economics, social life, etc. Education should impart the culture of the land to the younger generation and make them true representatives of the nation, and all secular knowledge will be welcome in consonance with it. Without this, education would be a failure.

Today we are trying to bring about a socialistic State. The wealth of the world is in the hands of a few, while the rest are wallowing in ignorance, poverty, hunger and ill-health. A few large-hearted souls raised their voice of protest against such a state of things which generated social conflict. Wealth in society is like blood in the body. The blood must circulate all through the body. If it does not reach any part of the body, that part gets withered and may even lead to gangrene jeopardising the life of the person. Similarly if wealth does not cir-

culate in any part of the society or body politic, that part withers and ultimately leads to the death of that society. Though socialism is desirable under the present circumstances, it will be only a half-way house and will not be able to solve all our problems. Swamiji wrote in one of his letters, 'I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.' Seventy-five years back Swamiji said, 'Everything goes to show that Socialism or some form of rule by the people, call it what you will, is coming on the boards. The people will certainly want the satisfaction of their material needs, less work, no oppression, no war, more food. What guarantee have we that this or any civilisation will last, unless it is based on religion, on the goodness of man? Depend on it, religion goes to the root of the matter. If it is right, all is right.' Socialism as conceived today is a product of materialism, but the present crisis is not merely in the outside world but also in the soul of man, and it can be resolved only by religion which raises man to the divine state. Any amount of political or economic manipulations cannot meet the situation. Moreover, when we come to the establishment of socialism we are confronted with the selfishness in man. An Act of Parliament cannot make him unselfish. So when the Government tries to implant socialism, the selfish people resort to various methods to satisfy their greed, such as hoarding, adulteration of foodstuffs and medicines misappropriation of funds, etc. The selfishness which makes them anti-social can be cured only by a higher and more effective selfishness, viz the desire for Mukti which leads to freedom from all the ills of life. If this adaptation of socialism is based on a religious foundation like the Karma Yoga of the Gita or the doctrine of service preached by Swamiji as service of man seeing God in him (Jiva is Shiva etc.), then socialism can take roots smoothly through democratic methods. Thus even in socialistic India religion has to be assigned an important role, so that our countrymen spontaneously accept it and work for it. This religious approach the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission have been trying to present before the nation.

All the prophets and great religious personalities were lovers of the poor. They came for all and not for the rich alone. Our society also was built on a socialistic outlook. Our law-givers never talked of rights but only of duties. Duties were fixed for everyone from the King to the man in the street, and also for the four castes which were to serve the society according to the capacity of each without claiming any privilege for their services. So were duties fixed for the members of the four Ashramas or stages of life. It was all duties and no rights. Everyone was expected to work for the nation through his prescribed duties. The present day outlook lays stress on rights rather than on duties, which is alien to our culture. Through the honest performance of duties one can not only serve the nation, but also progress spiritually; not by fighting for the rights can this be done. Swamiji has again and again pointed out to us that 'the twin ideals of India are renunciation and service'.

Above, I have briefly dealt with a few phases of the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda which we are trying to propagate throughout the world and also trying to translate through activities carried on by the Mission in India and abroad. According to our belief, service rendered to the ignorant, the needy and suffering as worship of the divine in them, raises secular work to the level of worship and this leads to God-realisation ultimately.

The message of Sri Ramakrishna finds a ready acceptance wherever it reaches in

countries far and near, which shows that it meets the needs of man in this age. Every great civilisation was ushered in by some spiritual personality whose life and message were at the back of that civilisation. The same thing is happening with the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. They are also ushering in a new epoch or civilisation.

Friends, we have been able to carry on this work for the last fifty years in Bombay through the kind co-operation of you all and I hope we shall be getting this co-operation in future also so that we may be able to serve greater and greater numbers day by day. May the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna be on all of us so that we may become fit instruments to propagate his message all over India and abroad!

VIVEKANANDA THROUGH THE EYES OF WESTERN DEVOTEES

MARIE LOUISE BURKE

Let me discuss here something of how we in the West look upon Swamiji [Vivekananda], of what his teachings mean to us and of how his influence is growing.

I should say first of all that we in the West who know Swamiji and who have studied his teachings look upon him as our very own. We think and also deeply *feel* that he belongs as much to the western world as to India, and I am sure he himself thought so. How many times did he not say that he belonged to the whole world, not just to any one part of the world! He was a World Teacher. Therefore it is not at all surprising that he is foreign to no one and that American devotees claim him as their own and feel that his message is as vital to the West as it is to the East. One may recall that he once said in America, 'I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East.' That was an extraordinary statement! When one considers that Lord Buddha's message profoundly changed the Eastern world—and that today after 2500 years it is still a living and dynamic religion, exerting influence over at least one third of the world's population—, when one considers the tremendous impact of Buddha's teaching, one can appreciate a little of the significance of Swamiji's statement about his message to the modern West.

Yes, I think there is no question that Swamiji belongs to us too. It is well known that he gave his best energies to America and England. He poured himself out for the western people. He worked almost incessantly and with full youthful vigour for over three years (from the summer of 1893, when he came to the Chicago Parliament of Religions, to the close of 1896, when he returned to India). Three years in the life of a prophet of Swamiji's stature is a long time. One word of his was enougl to transform a person for good; three years of teaching, lecturing, bestowing his powerful blessings wherever he went—that was more than enough to transform the entire western world. And that was not all. As you know, Swamiji returned to America in the latter half of 1899. He stayed in the West through 1900, primarily on the Pacific Coast, which he had not visited earlier. During that last year of his western mission, he again lectured and taught with great power; he put the final stamp, as it were,

on all that he had said before, underscoring, it seems, what he considered to be the most important aspect of his message. And again he showered his blessings on us.

So there is no question that Swamiji gave and gave and gave to the West. That was his nature: to give, to teach, to bless was his very life. But were the western people able to receive all that grace? I think so. I do not think the western people are different in the depths of their being from any other human beings. When God's grace is bestowed on the soul through a great prophet, the soul wakes up; that is all there is to it—East or West. Of course, in the West the results may take a little more time to manifest.

But a related question, and perhaps a more pertinent one, is: are the western people really able to understand Swami Vivekananda's teachings and the greatness of his personality? Yes, I think they are able to do so, at least to some extent. I have been asked several times since I have been in this country how it happens that I, a westerner, have been able to understand Swamiji. That is a very generous and kind question. Its implication is that I *have* understood him a little; and one could not be paid a more gracious compliment than that. I don't know how applicable it is in my case. However, if western devotees on the whole have understood a little of Swamiji, there are really some good reasons for it.

First of all the American mind feels very much at home with Swamiji. We feel no uneasiness or strangeness in his company. When we try to understand his teachings and to follow them we do not in any way feel that we are going against the main current of our own culture. Yes: we are going against all that is wrong and detrimental in our culture, but we are strengthening and purifying all that is good. America from its very inception has been imbued with many of the ideals that Swamiji teaches. In fact, the nation was founded on the basis of those ideals: the ideals, for instance, of individual freedom, of the equality of all people regardless of race, colour, or creed, of tolerance for all religious paths and forms of worship, of compassion—or, at least, generosity and helpfulness—towards others, of self-reliance, initiative, and courage. It never occurs to an American that there might be something he cannot do or achieve. The spirit of self-confidence that Swamiji called for is already an ingrained part of the American psychology. The daring, fearless spirit of the pioneer and frontiersman is in their blood. When there are no more frontiers on earth to conquer and settle, they take off into outer space—the moon is a mere way-station, in this adventure.

Thus when Swamiji calls for man to have faith in himself, when he calls for a religion based on the infinite glory of the true Self, the Ātman, it is not hard for westerners to understand him. We feel at home with such a religion. To tell the truth, we feel more at home with it than with Christianity. Christianity has a tendency to tell man that he is weak, that he is good for nothing, that he is a miserable sinner, and that he should beg for God's mercy. Now, the vast majority of Americans do not for a minute really believe this—well, maybe on Sunday morning some of them believe it for a few minutes; but during the rest of the week they believe they are fully capable of conquering the universe *by themselves*, under their own power. One may recall that when Swamiji said to a vast audience at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago: 'Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss—yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. . . . Ye divinities on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature', the whole audience cheered. He had struck a basic chord in the national

character, and there was an immediate, joyful response. Most Christian ministers were much distressed by that episode. No, the main stream of American thought and psychology is not at all disturbed by Swamiji's teachings; on the contrary, it seems to many of us that he came to America to spiritualize the American ideal and to set it on an adamantine foundation. In this respect he is indeed our own prophet.

There is a second reason why Swamiji's teachings are not difficult for the modern western mind to grasp, and that is their rationality. The way of reason is the path to truth that the West has blazed and cleared for itself, and that path the western people must not betray. Swamiji never asks us to. He never resorts to mystery, to the supernatural, or to what he would call 'mumbo-jumbo'. He never tells us that spiritual truths are forever beyond our limited comprehension and that we must humbly take them on faith. No: he places both the theory of religion and its practice on a firm rational basis. Therefore, all that the western world has achieved along rational and scientific lines is as much in tune with Swamiji's thought as are the spiritual achievements of the East. Nothing need be lost of the genius that is peculiar to the West when we follow Swamiji. Nor is his exposition of Vedānta in any way abstruse. He says exactly what he means in simple straightforward language. He expects us to understand, and because he is telling us about the truth of our own being, we do begin to understand.

I should also mention here that America was not totally unprepared for the teachings of Vedānta at the end of the last century. Despite their emphasis on material values and goals, the American people are not devoid of spiritual idealism. It has always been there like a golden thread woven through darker cloth. At times, it is tarnished and imperceptible; at other times it catches the light, as it were, and glows brilliantly—well, maybe not brilliantly, but at least visibly. It was glowing visibly in the early part of the nineteenth century. Some fifty years or so before Swamiji gave his first electrifying talk, there was in America a highly popular, though intellectual, movement known as Transcendentalism. Its guiding light was Ralph Waldo Emerson, who had been inspired by the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. During its day, Transcendentalism had a widespread influence, and although it had greatly waned by the time Swamiji came to the West, its spiritual ideals were still living in the memories of many of the people who knew him. It was not hard for those people to recognize Swamiji. He did not seem strange to them; he was, rather, the sun to the moon they had earlier known. In the nineteenth century, there were other movements as well that reflected Indian philosophy, and to many of their followers Swamiji was also like the sun itself.

So you see, Swamiji is not foreign to us. But I have not yet told you the real secret of our understanding of him. All through these years—the seventy-odd years since Swamiji sailed for the last time from western shores—students of Vedānta in the West have been receiving an additional blessing, or, I should say, an extension of the same blessing. Perhaps without this we would not have been able to understand Swamiji at all. Certainly we would not have been able to know and follow him with anything like the love and enthusiasm with which we know and follow him today. I am referring here to the ministry of many great Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order who have come to the West to carry on Swamiji's work, to establish and develop Societies (or Ashramas), to spread the teachings of Vedānta, and to make us their own. Their work among us has been a flow of grace for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. In-

deed, expressions of gratitude in connection with a relationship that is so deep and timeless seem not only totally inadequate but inappropriate as well. But I know that while hundreds of western devotees would have appreciated Swamiji's teachings and writings on their own, they would have understood very little of him if they had not sat for years at the feet of the great Swamis who have come after him, who exemplify his teachings in their lives and characters, and who are able to convey the true spirit of those teachings to others. That is the secret: just as you have had the opportunity in India of hearing about spiritual greatness from the lips of the spiritually great, so we in the West have had that same opportunity. Thus if we understand Swamiji even a little, that is really why.

I have been telling of how much Swamiji gave to the West, and also I have been boasting that we in the West feel at ease with him and think of him as our own. But if what I have been saying has any truth in it, then you may well ask me: 'What in the world is the matter with the people in the West ? What good has it done for Swamiji to pour out his blessings on you ? It would seem that instead of growing more and more spiritual, you are growing more and more materialistic. Where is Swamiji's influence ? ' That is a very good question. I think you are too generous and polite to ask it, but it *should* be asked, and I shall try to answer it, briefly.

Yes, I must admit that to all outward appearances, the western world has been quite unaware that a bolt of enormous spiritual voltage struck it during the last years of the nineteenth century. And if ten years ago I had had to answer the question I have posed on your behalf, I would be in a fix. But during the past decade some truly astonishing things have been taking place. There has been a sudden, extensive, and unmistakable spiritual stirring and awakening that is changing American culture on all levels. I would say that the spiritual seeds that Swamiji sowed with such power and sureness are without question beginning to sprout, or at least to stir with wakened life. In one sense it is inevitable that this should be so ; it is in the very nature of things. Swamiji once said ; 'There [in the West] they have reached the climax of Bhoga [enjoyment]. Being satiated with enjoyment to the full, their minds are not getting peace now, even in those enjoyments, and they feel as if they wanted something else.' Perhaps in the year Swamiji spoke those words, the West had not actually been satiated with enjoyment. He spoke always for an age, not for a day, and I would say that those words were prophetic. During the half century that followed them, the West has indeed reached the saturation point. The middle classes, even the labouring classes, have had everything in the way of material comfort and entertainment that could be desired. The average man wants for nothing, and he has leisure time, moreover, to enjoy all this affluence to the full. Very few people in the West can say, IF I only had another car or another TV set, or a longer vacation, then I would be happy. No, he *has* another car and another TV set and a longer vacation, and he is not happy. There is no real joy, no real peace, no sense of fulfilment. As Swamiji said: 'They feel as if they wanted something else'—something not material. To put the matter very simply, the western people as a whole—and particularly, I think, Americans—are making one of the greatest discoveries that human beings can make, a discovery that was made thousands of years ago in India. They are discovering for themselves that the infinite soul can never find fulfilment in the finite—never: not at any time or in any possible world. On the contrary, as finite goods pile up and up, and as opportunities for sense enjoyments increase, man's misery and suffocation also increase: more often

than not in geometrical progression. The average American is beginning to wake up to this truth. And it is precisely at this point of awakening that the latent seeds of spirituality begin to quicken.

All over the United States, in all social and economic levels, the youth of the country have turned away from a materially based and motivated culture. They want no part of it. With their young, undimmed eyes they have seen its futility; they have seen its fatness, its smugness, its hypocrisy, and its despair; and they have packed their bundles and have taken off down the road. During the last decade thousands and thousands of young people—boys and girls in their teens and early twenties—have left their comfortable homes and have set off without a cent in their pockets in search of a more spiritually meaningful life than their parents have offered them or have understood. As you know, these wandering, soul-hungry children are generally known as 'hippies'. But it is not only among the hippies that this movement exists. A spiritual restlessness has seized all types of American youth—beards or no beards. The ferment is nation-wide. There is, no doubt, a great deal of tragic misdirection, self-deception, and self-destruction mixed up in all this; it is so with almost everything in this world. But I believe the core of what is taking place in the West is sound and pure: that core is a genuine yearning of the human soul for God, and in the long run, that is what will count.

Not surprisingly, the young people of America have been discovering India. During the past few years, classes in yoga and meditation have become matters of course. Everywhere in the large American cities one can find Indian swamis and gurus of all kinds. I cannot say that all are genuine; but their followers are for the most part deeply sincere. The interest is wide-spread. All the large bookstores, and many small ones as well, have sections devoted to Indian scriptures and Indian philosophy; the universities are offering courses in eastern religions, meditation classes are held on TV, and only a few months ago someone pointed out to me a nondenominational meditation room in a recently built and very busy airport. Christianity is itself becoming more and more eastern in outlook and practice; and sympathy is everywhere growing for the religious seeker, whatever his way of search. Hardly anyone, for instance, thinks it strange or alarming nowadays to see an ochre-clad monk walking on the streets of a big city; whereas only a few years ago such a sight would have drawn unfriendly and uncomprehending glares. I do not want to give you the impression that this active interest in eastern religion has become a fully accepted part of American society; it has not—not yet. But rapidly, very rapidly indeed, a tremendous change is under way: a definite, and I believe irreversible, shift from material to spiritual values is taking place before our very eyes.

Now, I do not think there is the slightest doubt that this largely undirected spiritual ferment—by whatever names its various aspects may be called—is in large measure due to the advent of Sri Ramakrishna and to the blessings bestowed upon the western world by Swamiji, one of the greatest prophets history has known. Nor have I any doubt that the American youth as a whole are on the verge of discovering Swami Vivekananda himself and of consciously finding in him their moral and spiritual inspiration and direction. I have already mentioned the affinity of the American people with Swamiji. Let me repeat: He embodies our highest ideals of human dignity, equality, and freedom. He raises those ideals to divine heights and bases them on the surest of foundations—the unshakeable foundation of the Self, the

immutable Spirit that exists equally and eternally in everyone—which is, indeed, Existence Itself, Truth Itself. Here Swamiji is directly answering the demands of the youth of America. They demand a great many things, but all these various demands stem, I believe, from one basic cry—the cry for truth. Our youth questions the validity of every ideal we profess to follow. They want their individual lives and the life of the nation to ring absolutely true and to be based on eternal verities—if there are such things. *Are* there such things? In the western world that question is becoming desperate. And Swamiji answers with the authority of a prophet: Yes. Yes, there is one immutable truth behind all life and all ideals; not only that, we can and must *experience* that truth, and our individual and collective lives must be deeply rooted in it and must continually manifest it.

That is the only hope for the world. If we fall short of living up to the great Advaitic truth as Swamiji taught it—the truth that all human beings the world over are one, that all are manifestations of the same Divinity—we will not be able to solve the problems of the present age. On what else if not a sense of the divine unity of all mankind can one base the selfless understanding, love, and help that is imperative today everywhere? Nor is love by itself enough. Strength is also necessary. One can stand on the shore and love a drowning man with all one's heart; one can weep buckets of selfless tears for him, but if one cannot swim, the man will drown just the same. We must have the strength, the ability, the self-confidence, and fearlessness that arise from faith in our own divinity if we are to face and master the obstructive forces of the world. And master them we must if we are to help ourselves and serve others. As long as man thinks he is small—a finite, vulnerable creature—he will be either a coward or a bully; when he knows he is in reality the vast indestructible Spirit, then there is no love he cannot give and no obstacle he cannot conquer. Seventy-five years ago, Swamiji taught these simple but profound truths in the West. Today the young people in the western world are earnestly searching for those truths. Surely they are on the verge of finding them in Swamiji and of recognizing him as their hero; and, as surely, they will become in turn the pure, self-sacrificing heroes Swamiji wanted.

In the meanwhile, the Vedanta Societies in America are growing in strength and membership. There are eleven main societies, and several branch societies. I am speaking here, of course, of the societies that are a part of the Ramakrishna Mission and that are led by Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order. The members of these societies, both lay and monastic, are intensely earnest men and women, young and old alike. Many of the non-monastic devotees have dedicated their entire lives to the cause of Vedānta, to the work of whatever Vedanta Society they happen to belong to, and to spiritual practice. There is nothing else in their lives but this: and, needless to say, their lives are very rich indeed. Now, these societies have not grown fast, but because of such earnest and dedicated members and because of the farsighted leadership of the Swamis, they are striking very deep roots.

As a matter of fact, the quietness and steadiness of the growth of these Western societies have been essential to their strength and solidity. When an American fad hits an organization, that organization is finished—just as though a horde of locusts had swept over it. It is drained of substance, and is often never heard from again. Even a small group of superficial sensation-seeking members can ruin a young religious society. The Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order have purposefully prevented any such thing from

happening. They have kept the Vedanta Societies on a high intellectual level, they have demanded great seriousness of purpose from the members, and they have avoided all inordinate publicity. As a consequence the Societies, though they may not be big, are rock-strong. They are, I think, quite ready today to receive the many young people who are beginning to come to them as a result of the general spiritual ferment. It is very possible that the period of quiet, slow, and intense growth is over and that the period of expansion is beginning. Indeed, it is inevitable that this should be so. As Swamiji prophesied, a great tidal wave of spirituality will sweep over the world. Is not America witnessing the first rising swells of that great wave? I think so. I also think that throughout the world the Vedanta Societies that carry Sri Ramakrishna's and Swami Vivekananda's message will stand on the crest of that wave; for, after all, it is Sri Ramakrishna's, Holy Mother's, and Swamiji's light and power that created that wave in the first place, and it is their light and power that will carry it forward.

In conclusion, let me say again that I think our revered and beloved Swamiji belongs as intimately and significantly to America as to India. And it is my conviction and the conviction of many American devotees that when, on the one hand, India's great spiritual genius is fully awakened and renewed in accordance with Swamiji's teachings, and when, on the other hand, America's scientific and technological genius is directed toward selfless, world-benefiting ends, and when, further, a mutual and rich exchange of ideas and teachers takes place between these two great peoples—as he wanted—then no power on earth can prevent the entire world from becoming regenerated and transformed.

ESSAY ON APPLIED RELIGION

ON MAKING SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

Spiritual progress, psychologically speaking, is an inner journey upwards. This signifies unfoldment of an aspirant's potential within, manifestations of which can also be discerned from without in his disposition and conduct.

In Hinduism, spiritual unfoldment is taught to be the direct outcome of the rising of the *kuṇḍalinī*, the spiritual potential lying usually asleep in human beings. No enduring spiritual progress is ever possible without stabilization of the risen state of the *kuṇḍalinī*. Hence it is important for every aspirant to know something about the *kuṇḍalinī* and how it is roused. There are authoritative texts on the subject available in classical Hindu religious literature. Those who have the competence, earnestness and time, are welcome to study the subject from such texts, under a competent teacher.

Here, for elucidating what we have briefly to say on the *kuṇḍalinī*, we shall depend mostly on what Sri Ramakrishna has taught from personal experience. We shall do so

not only because of the freshness of his vivid descriptions of the awakened *kuṇḍalinī,* but also because he compassionately prescribes such simple yet effective disciplines for its rousing that these may be used without much difficulty by the earnest seeker living in modern society. Here we have one description by Sri Ramakrishna of the rousing of the *kuṇḍalinī*:

'Yoga is not possible if the mind dwells on "woman and gold". The mind of a worldly man generally moves among the three lower centres; those at the navel, at the sexual organ, and the organ of evacuation. After great effort and spiritual practice the Kundalini is awakened. According to the yogis there are three nerves in the spinal column: Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna. Along the Sushumna are six lotuses, or centres, the lowest being known as the Muladhara. Then come successively Svadhishthana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha, and Ajna. These are the six centres. The Kundalini, when awakened, passes through the lower centres and comes to the Anahata, which is at the heart. It stays there. At that time the mind of the aspirant is withdrawn from the three lower centres. He feels the awakening of Divine Consciousness and sees Light. In mute wonder he sees that radiance and cries out: "What is this? What is this?"

'After passing through the six centres, the Kundalini reaches the thousand-petalled lotus known as the Sahasrara, and the aspirant goes into samadhi.

'According to the Vedas these centres are called "bhumi", "planes". There are seven such planes. The centre at the heart corresponds to the fourth plane of the Vedas. According to the Tantra there is in this centre a lotus called Anahata, with twelve petals.

'The centre known as Visuddha is the fifth plane. This centre is at the throat and has a lotus with sixteen petals. When the Kundalini reaches this plane, the devotee longs to talk and hear only about God. Conversation on worldly subjects, on "woman and gold", causes him great pain. He leaves a place where people talk of these matters.

'Then comes the sixth plane, corresponding to the centre known as Ajna. This centre is located between the eyebrows and it has a lotus with two petals. When the Kundalini reaches it, the aspirant sees the form of God. But still there remains a slight barrier between the devotee and God. It is like a light inside a lantern. You may think you have touched the light, but in reality you cannot because of the barrier of glass.

'And last of all is the seventh plane, which, according to Tantra, is the centre of the thousand-petalled lotus. When the Kundalini arrives there, the aspirant goes into samadhi. In that lotus dwells Satchidananda Siva, the Absolute. There Kundalini, the awakened power, unites with Siva. This is known as the union of Siva and Sakti.

'When the Kundalini rises to the Sahasrara and the mind goes into samadhi, the aspirant loses all consciousness of the outer world. He can no longer retain his physical body. If milk is poured into his mouth, it runs out again. In that state the life-breath lingers for twenty-one days and then passes out. Entering the "black waters" of the ocean, the ship never comes back. But the Isvarakotis, such as the Incarnations of God, can come down from this state of samadhi. They can descend from this exalted state because they like to live in the company of devotees and enjoy the love of God. God retains in them the "ego of Knowledge" or the "ego of Devotion" so that they may teach men. Their minds move back and forth, as it were, between these two planes.'[1]

On how to awaken this great power in man, some of Sri Ramakrishna's helpful teachings are given here:

'The Primordial Energy resides in all bodies as the Kundalini. She is like a sleeping snake coiled up—"of the form of a sleeping snake, having the Muladhara for Her abode". The Kundalini

[1] 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4, 1947), pp. 455-6

is speedily awakened if one follows the path of bhakti. God cannot be seen unless She is awakened. Sing earnestly and secretly in solitude:

Waken, O Mother! O Kundalini whose nature is Bliss Eternal!
Thou art the serpent coiled in sleep, in the lotus of the Muladhara.

'Ramprasad achieved perfection through singing. One obtains the vision of God if one sings with yearning heart.'[2]

'When the Kundalini is awakened, one attains bhava, bhakti, prema, and so on. This is the path of devotion.'[3]

Indeed, Sri Ramakrishna emphasized the disciplines of *bhakti* in preference to those of *rāja-yoga* for the generality of aspirants, though he himself was a teacher *par excellence* of *rāja-yoga*. It is known that he taught *rāja-yoga* to Swami Vivekananda. In this matter Sri Ramakrishna was pragmatic in his own way. He knew that most aspirants in modern times could not easily follow the disciplines of *rāja-yoga*, and yet the awakening of the *kuṇḍalinī* was the most needed thing for attaining spiritual transformation. He therefore emphasized a method which was within the reach of all earnest aspirants.

Giving a vivid description of how he often experienced the movement of the *kuṇḍalinī*, the risen spiritual current within him, Sri Ramakrishna said in an intimate talk with a devotee:

'Well, some say that my soul, going into samadhi, flies about like a bird in the Mahakasa, the Infinite Space.

'Once a sadhu of Hrishikesh came here. He said to me: "There are five kinds of samadhi. I find you have experienced them all. In these samadhis one feels the sensation of the Spiritual Current to be like the movement of an ant, a fish, a monkey, a bird, or a serpent."

'Sometimes the Spiritual Current rises through the spine, crawling like an ant.

'Sometimes, in samadhi, the soul swims joyfully in the ocean of divine ecstasy, like a fish.

'Sometimes, when I lie down on my side, I feel the Spiritual Current pushing me like a monkey and playing with me joyfully. I remain still. That Current, like a monkey, suddenly with one jump reaches the Sahasrara. That is why you see me jump up with a start.

'Sometimes, again, the Spiritual Current rises like a bird hopping from one branch to another. The place where it rests feels like fire. It may hop from Muladhara to Svadhishthana, from Svadhishthana to the heart, and thus gradually to the head.

'Sometimes the Spiritual Current moves up like a snake. Going in a zigzag way, at last it reaches the head and I go into samadhi.

'A man's spiritual consciousness is not awakened unless his Kundalini is aroused.

'The Kundalini dwells in the Muladhara. When it is aroused, it passes along the Sushumna nerve, goes through the centres of Svadhishthana, Manipura, and so on, and at last reaches the head. This is called the movement of the Mahavayu, the Spiritual Current. It culminates in samadhi.

'One's spiritual consciousness is not awakened by the mere reading of books. One should also pray to God. The Kundalini is aroused if the aspirant feels restless for God.'[4]

About Holy Mother's teaching on the rousing of the *kuṇḍalinī*, we read in her *Life*:

'Among spiritual disciplines, she stressed Japa as most important. According to her, initiation with the Mantra purified the body. God, she said, had given fingers in order that they might be blessed by counting Japa. An athlete was in the habit of carrying a calf in his arms from its very birth. He did it every day and as a consequence he gradually developed the strength neces-

[2] ibid., p. 309
[3] ibid., p. 577
[4] ibid., pp. 813-4

sary to carry it without effort even after it had become a full-grown animal. Exactly similar, she used to say, was the nature of the spiritual progress one made, gradually and unobserved, through the practice of Japa. By continually making Japa thousands of times, one's mind automatically got steadied and absorbed in meditation and one's Kundalini (spiritual power) was ultimately roused. When a pure mind performed Japa, the holy word bubbled itself up spontaneously from within without any effort on its part. One who reached this state attained success in Japa.'[5]

Once in reply to a disciple's question, 'Maharaj, how can the Kundalini be awakened ?' Swami Brahmananda said:

'According to some there are special exercises by which the Kundalini can be awakened, but I believe it can best be awakened by the practice of japam and meditation. The practice of japam is specially suited to this present age; and there is no spiritual practice easier than this, but meditation must accompany the repetition of the mantram.'[6]

On another occasion he said:

'So long as the Kundalini moves in a downward direction, the mind of man is filled with lustful thoughts. But as it rises, the mind also rises and then moves toward things spiritual.'[7]

Aspirants are warned by authentic teachers that the *kuṇḍalinī*—which is the highest power inhering in a human being—should be handled with great caution and purity of mind. Striking such a note of warning, Swami Brahmananda cautioned a disciple with the following words:

'Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) has said, "A little awakening of the Kundalini is dangerous." Unless the Kundalini rises to the higher planes, lust, anger, and other low passions become very powerful. That is why the Vaishnava practices as a lover or friend are dangerous. Constantly dwelling on the love-relations between Sri Krishna and Sri Radha, they cannot control their lust and are degraded. I know of one who practised this way for a long time, but afterwards married a bad woman. One, therefore, should not in the beginning study books on Sri Krishna's love-relations with the Gopis.'[8]

Great caution is advised because, as we have seen, the proper and adequate rousing of the Kundalini is highly important for all spiritual attainments, so much so that Swami Vivekananda says in his *Rāja-yoga*:

'... the rousing of the Kundalini is the one and only way to attaining Divine Wisdom, super-conscious perception, realization of the spirit. The rousing may come in various ways, through love for God, through the mercy of perfected sages, or through the power of the analytic will of the philosopher. Wherever there was any manifestation of what is ordinarily called supernatural power or wisdom, there a little current of Kundalini must have found its way into the Sushumna. Only, in the vast majority of such cases, people had ignorantly stumbled on some practice which set free a minute portion of the coiled-up Kundalini. All worship, consciously or unconsciously, leads to this end. The man who thinks that he is receiving response to his prayers does not know that the fulfilment comes from his own nature, that he has succeeded by the mental attitude of prayer in waking up a bit of this infinite power which is coiled up within himself. What, thus, men ignorantly worship under various names, through fear and tribulation, the Yogi declares to the world to be the real power coiled up in every being, the mother of eternal happiness, if we but

5 *Sri Sarada Devi—The Holy Mother* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras (1949) pp. 259-260

6 Swami Prabhavananda: *The Eternal Companion* (Vedanta Press, Hollywood, California, 1947) p. 141

7 ibid., p. 186

8 *Spiritual Talks* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Pithoragarh, U.P. pp. 37-8

know how to approach her. And Raja-Yoga is the science of religion, the rationale of all worship, all prayers, forms, ceremonies, and miracles.'[9]

There are progressive stages of spiritual unfoldment. One should not stop until he has reached the final goal. The final goal is to see God, and to experientially know of the identity of one's soul with the Supreme Spirit. We must remember this one fact that whatever may be the degrees of our spiritual attainment, we are never safe until we have seen God. Even from great heights one may suddenly fall and roll in the filth. Therefore we must never think too highly of our own spirituality. Pride of spirituality is the worst kind of egotism. When one realizes the Ātman, one's ignorance is once for all shattered. Only then is the aspirant secure. The chick that comes out into the golden light of the open sky cannot any more enter into the broken shell of ignorance.

When a person sees God, he knows that he is seeing God. None has to tell him about that. God's own light reveals Himself. No other light can reveal God, for His light alone is revealing everything in the world. It is by realizing the identity of one's soul with the Supreme Spirit that one becomes illumined. Until that state is reached, as pointed out by Swami Brahmananda repeatedly in his teachings, one must constantly keep flaming a divine dissatisfaction with what he has attained.[10] Spiritual progress is not for him who looks backward and pats himself for a good job done. But it is for the aspirant who looks inward and forward, and forges ahead with dedication and determination.

He looks inward to discover his own failings and strength; he looks forward in order to measure the way yet to be covered. When this divine dissatisfaction spontaneously rises in an aspirant's heart, one may be sure that he has been progressing on the path.

9 *The Complete Works*, Vol. I (1962), p. 165
10 Swami Prabhavananda: op. cit., p. 127

MIND AND MATTER

Dr. Sampooran Singh

Introduction

About five thousand years ago, man perfected the subjective methodology of gaining knowledge, and this gave birth to the Vedas, which are the lighthouse of eternal wisdom leading man to salvation, inspiring him to supreme accomplishment and to knowledge that is independent of time. The ancient seers or sages studied the role of mind and its interaction with matter (body).

It was during the times of Newton (1642-1727) that the idea of a mechanized universe and the doctrine of materialism received their special impulse. The scientific discoveries which began in the late nineteenth century, shattered the physicist's fundamental concepts of the nature of reality, and the validity of our ideas about space, time, matter, energy, and causality. We must continue to jettison much human vanity and many anthropocentric arguments in the light of the new scientific discoveries. The stream of knowledge has revealed a non-mechanical reality, where mind and consciousness play a predominant role in understanding the universe and man.

The relationship between mind and

matter which puzzled the ancient philosophers 5,000 years ago and is eluding the modern scientists is still an open problem. This article presents a synthesis of the physicist's concepts and the concepts of ancient Indian philosophies on mind and matter. I will try to show on the basis of modern scientific knowledge that human beings are not just physico-chemical mechanisms—robots which work out automatic responses to the signals they receive through their eyes and ears in their calculating-machine brains or pieces of sophisticated machinery like the present-day electronic computers—but are controlled by a new dimension called mind and thought; and that the underlying substratum of the universe is something not entirely different in nature from thought. The fields of scientific studies are very wide and diversified, so I propose to discuss the physicist's viewpoint on mind and matter in this article. It seems that the physicist's studies are tending to bridge the gap between science and ancient Indian philosophy, and the two concepts are nearer each other today than at any time in the history of man.

Physicist's Concept of Mind and Matter

The Neurological Equipment

The bulk of the human brain, including the cortex, is made up of nerve cells and fibrils, the neurones. There is very little information available about the complexities of communication between the individual neurones of the brain. A human cerebral cortex has been estimated to contain some 10^{11} neurones which make up to 10^{13} or 10^{14} specific cell-cell connections with each other.[1] Most activities of the nervous system are originated by sensory experience transmitted by sensory receptors, whether these be visual receptors, auditory receptors, tactile receptors on the surface of the body, or other kinds of receptors. The nervous system can receive literally thousands of bits of information simultaneously, from the different sensory organs and then integrate all these to determine the response to be made by the organs of action in the body. Perhaps the most important function of the human brain is to co-ordinate and reduce to manageable dimensions the innumerable and varied impressions which are being constantly received by the senses. The manner in which the brain determines behaviour is one of the most exciting and challenging problems in science today. It involves an increasing number of scientists from an ever-widening range of disciplines: physiologists, psychologists, biochemists, anatomists, physicists, engineers, and mathematicians. The detailed modes of operations of perception and memory, attention and consciousness, emotional states and sleep are being studied. The concepts that consciousness depends on (*a*) the rates of firing of neurons, (*b*) concentrations of certain chemicals in certain parts of the brain, (*c*) detailed behaviour patterns of response in the situations of interest, (*d*) storage (memory) of the results of reactions, (*e*) coding of incoming sensory information—all these have already been discarded, and a discussion of this is beyond the purview of this paper.

The world is a construct of our sensations, perceptions, memories. The brain is the organ of consciousness, perception, and memory. Each memory must involve some stabilization of specific channels within the brain: some input-trigger and a whole series of internal situations. We must ask how we are to fit this consciousness into our scientific picture. How can a collection of atoms of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and so forth—in whatever complex ways

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[1] Whittaker, V. P., Naturwissenschaften, *60*, 281, *1973*.

they are organized—be aware of anything? What is the relation of consciousness to the material apparatus of the brain?

Consciousness

Eccles says:

> 'By consciousness I mean conscious experience, which each one of us has privately for himself. . . . One may consider conscious experience at three levels. There is firstly outer sensing, which is the perceptual experience due to input from sense organs, not only from the external world by exteroceptors, such as the organs of sight, hearing, smell and touch, but also from body states, e.g. by proprioceptors from muscles, joints, fascia, etc. and by receptors for pain, hunger, thirst, etc. Secondly, there is inner sensing, which is not directly derived from sense data though it is often triggered by these data, and has many derivatives from these data. It includes the experiences of thinking, emotions, dispositional intentions, memories, dreams and creative imagination. Thirdly, there is the ego or self that is central to all experience. It transcends immediate experiences and gives each of us the sense of continuity and identity throughout a lifetime. This sense of continuity bridges periods of unconsciousnes in sleep and in other less pleasant ways.'[2]

Not every nervous process, nay by no means every cerebral process, is accompanied by consciousness. Schrodinger says:

> 'Any succession of events in which we take part with sensations, perceptions and possibly with actions gradually drops out of the domain of consciousness when the same string of events repeats itself in the same way very often. But it is immediately shot up into the conscious region, if at such a repetition either the occasion or the environmental conditions met with on its pursuit differ from what they were on all the previous incidences.'[3]

The heartbeat, the breathing, etc., are controlled by involuntary muscles, and have long ago dropped from the sphere of consciousness. If the external situations become abnormal, these reflex actions immediately shoot up into the conscious region. The individual life is the 'well memorized' repetition of a string of events that has taken place in much the same fashion countless times before; but in the case of a changing environment—or what we call a new experience—the perception, the analysis and the response are controlled by the domain of consciousness.

Physicist's World

Theoretical physics, says Koestler,

> 'has become more and more "occult", cheerfully breaking practically every previously sacrosanct "law of nature", and leaning towards such "supernatural" concepts as negative mass, holes in space and time flowing backwards. In the fantastic and surrealistic world of modern quantum physics, the commonsense notions of space, time, matter, energy, and causality no longer apply. The greatest physicists of our century from Einstein and Planck to Schrodinger and Heisenberg have all been acutely aware of the "mystical" or "occult" nature of the concepts with which they operate, and some of the greatest among them have been groping towards a synthesis of physics and parapsychology.'[4]

Heisenberg emphasizes that 'atoms are not things. . . . When we get down to the atomic level, the objective world in space and time no longer exists, and the mathematical symbols of theoretical physics refer merely to possibilities, not to facts.'[5] Heisenberg will probably go down in history as the man who put an end to causal determinism in physics—and thereby in philosophy—with his celebrated Principle of In-

[2] Eccles, John C. Naturwissenschaften, *60*, 167, 1973.

[3] Schrodinger, E.: *Mind and Matter* (Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 4.

[4] Koestler, A.: *The Roots of Coincidence* (Hutchinson of London, 1972), Preface.

[5] Heisenberg, W., *Der Teil und das Ganze*, Munchen, 1969, pp. 63-4 and 115.

determinacy (alternatively referred to as the Principle of Uncertainty) for which he got the Nobel Prize in 1931. The simple Rutherford-Bohr model for the atom had to be abandoned in favour of a mathematical theory which got rid of the worst paradoxes, but at the price of renouncing any claim of intelligibility or representability in terms of three-dimensional space, time, matter or causation. The very attempt of the mathematical theory, Heisenberg wrote, 'to conjure up a picture of (elementary particles) and think of them in visual terms is wholly to misinterpret them'.[6]

'The electron', de Broglie proclaimed, 'is at once a corpuscle and a wave.'[7] This dualism, which is fundamental to modern physics, Bohr called the 'Principle of Complementarity'. Heisenberg adds, 'Complementarity accords very neatly with the Cartesian dualism of matter and mind'.[8] The same idea was expressed earlier by Wolfgang Pauli, who says:

> 'Modern science has perhaps brought us nearer to a more satisfactory understanding of this relationship (between mind and body, between the inward and the outward), by introducing the concept of complementarity into physics itself. It would be a more satisfactory solution if mind and body could be interpreted as complementary aspects of the same reality.'[9]

This, together with the constant emphasis on the theme 'atoms are not things', 'on the atomic level the objective world ceases to exist', is suggestive of that post-materialistic trend in modern physics. Physical substance has virtually been driven out of physical existence and only stresses and relation between the electrons and protons are left, and these have to be expressed in terms of mathematical formulae. In Einstein's cosmos, as in the sub-atomic micro-cosmos, the non-substantial aspects dominate; matter dissolves into energy, and energy into shifting configurations of something unknown. Eddington summed it up in his epigram: 'The stuff of the world is mind-stuff.' These considerations have enticed many physicists into a flirtation with parapsychology—or at least a tolerant attitude towards it.

Theoretical physicists are well aware of the surrealistic nature of the world they have discovered. But it is also a world of great mystery and beauty, reflected in those fantastic photographs of events in the bubble-chamber. This technique enables the physicist to observe the unthinkable—the transformation of mass into energy and of energy into mass. When a photon, a concentrated 'package of light', without rest-mass, flies past an atomic nucleus, the photon is converted into an electron and a positron, both of which have mass, or even into two pairs of them. Vice versa, when an electron and a positron meet they destroy each other, converting their joint masses into high-energy gamma rays. The conversion of mass to energy and vice versa is given by Einstein's formula $E = mc^2$. In the general theory of relativity, mass, inertia, and gravity had all been reduced to stresses, warps or kinks in empty, multi-dimensional space. The 'non-things' of quantum theory and wave mechanics are thus not isolated curiosities in modern physics, but the culmination of a development which started towards the end of the last century. To have penetrated to this depth below the world of appearances is one of the greatest triumphs of human ingenuity.

The 'world of science' has become so

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[6] Quoted by Sir Cyril Burt, Smythies, J. R., ed., *Science and ESP*, London, 1967, pp. 80-1.

[7] Quoted by Heisenberg, op. cit., p. 101.

[8] Quoted by Sir Cyril Burt: *Psychology and Psychical Research* (The Seventeenth Frederick W. H. Myers Memorial Lecture, London, SPR, 1968), p. 36.

[9] Pauli, W., and Jung, C. J.: *Naturerklarung und Psyche* (Studien aus dem C. G. Jung Institut, Zurich, IV, 1952), p. 164.

completely objective that, firstly, it leaves no room for the mind and its immediate sensations; secondly, it wants one to take oneself out of the picture, i.e., stepping back into the role of a non-concerned observer; and thirdly, the world-picture it presents is 'colourless, cold, mute'. The world of science lacks, or is deprived of, everything that contemplates, perceives or feels—i.e., everything subjective. The material world has been constructed at the price of taking the self, that is, mind, out of it, removing it; mind is not part of it; obviously, therefore, it can neither act on it nor be acted upon by any of its parts.

Some readers may remember Eddington's famous parable of the two writing desks: one is the antique piece of furniture at which he is seated, resting his arms on it; the other is the scientific physical body which not only lacks all and every sensual qualities but in addition is riddled with holes. By far the greatest part of it is empty space, just nothingness, interspersed with innumerable tiny specks of something, the electrons and the nuclei whirling around, but always separated by distances at least 100.000 times their own size. After having contrasted the two in his wonderful style he summarizes thus:

> 'In the world of physics we watch a shadowgraph performance of familiar life. The shadow of my elbow rests on the shadow-table as the shadow-ink flows over the shadow-paper . . . The frank realization that physical science is concerned with a world of shadows is one of the most significant of recent advances.'[10]

On both the cosmic and the subatomic scale, the intimate tangible relationship between substantial and non-substantial turns out to be an illusion. This is also evident from the biological needs which have determined the evolution of our senses. Sir Cyril Burt says:

> 'Our tactile perception of the gravitational effects of mass (e.g., a grain of sand falling on the skin) requires a stimulus of at least $0 \cdot 1$ gram, say about 10^{20} ergs; the kinaesthetic sense (e.g., lifting a weight) is coarser still. On the other hand, the eye in rod-vision is sensitive to less than 5 quanta of radiant energy, about 10^{-10} ergs or rather less. In detecting energy therefore man's perceptual apparatus is 10^{30} times more sensitive than it is in detecting mass.'[11]

Interaction between Mind and Matter

One hundred years ago, in 1874, John Tyndall (1820-93) in the Belfast address to the British Association said:

> 'Take your dead hydrogen atoms, your dead phosphorus atoms, and all the other atoms, dead as grains of shot, of which the brain is formed. Imagine them separate and sensationless; observe them running together and forming all imaginable combinations. This, as a purely mechanical process, is seeable by the mind. But can you see, or dream, or in any way imagine, how out of that mechanical act, and from these individually dead atoms, sensation, thought, and emotion are to arise?'[12]

The above suggestion of Tyndall that matter has the capability of sensation is, perhaps, difficult to accept at the present time when the analysis of matter has led to the loss of much of its 'materiality'. The atoms of matter are no longer thought of as small hard lumps of substance, but only as complicated systems of electric forces, describable only in mathematical symbols. We cannot detect any signs of feeling or consciousness in a pound of salt, nor can we observe or study its mental qualities. After

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[10] Eddington, A. S.: *The Nature of the Physical World* (Cambridge University Press, 1928). Introduction.

[11] Sir Cyril Burt: op. cit.

[12] Quoted by Butler, J. A. V.: *Science and Human Life* (Pergamon Press, London, 1957), p 61.

discussing Tyndall's observations, Butler concludes:

> 'At least we may regard awareness and sensation—the whole world of human consciousness—not as a chimera, a mere illusion, for which there is no room in a universe of forces and atoms, but something which has a real existence.'[13]

The awareness itself is responsible for the mental picture. The perception cannot be described as being made of atoms, it cannot be measured, it has no dimensions in space. This leads one to accept a dual world—the outer world which is the subject of science and the inner world which is incapable even of being described in the same terms. Butler concludes:

> 'Although consciousness cannot be described in the same terms as the "matter" of the outside world, it is curiously associated with it and all our conscious states seem to have some physical background or equivalent. This intimate association of the two worlds (the inner world of experience and the outer world of matter) suggests that they may only be two distinct aspects of a single phenomenon.'[14]

Sir Charles Sherrington, the famous physiologist, discussed the interaction of mind and matter. He says: 'Mind, for anything perception can compass, goes therefore in our spatial world more ghostly than a ghost. Invisible, intangible, it is a thing not even of outline; it is not a "thing". It remains without sensual confirmation and remains without it forever.'[15] Sherrington further writes: 'Sensations and thoughts do not belong to the "world of energy", they cannot produce any change in this world of energy.'[16]

'All our sensations, perceptions and observations have a strong, personal, subjective tinge and do not convey the nature of the "thing-in-itself", to use Kant's term,'[17] says Schrodinger. The idea of subjectivity was born more than 5,000 years ago. Eccles has, therefore, stated: 'By consciousness I mean conscious experience, which each of us has privately for himself.'[18] Schrodinger says:

> '....We accept the time-hallowed discrimination between subject and object. ... Its rigid logical consequence has been revealed by Kant: the sublime, but empty, idea of "thing-in-itself" about which we forever know nothing. It is the same elements that go to compose my mind and the world. This situation is the same for every mind and its world, in spite of the unfathomable abundance of "cross-references" between them. The world is given to me only once, not one existing and one perceived.'[19]

The modern physics has expounded and established a conception of the universe as a non-mechanical reality run by forces which do not require any material backing. It is the only kind of universe in which mind and consciousness can play their parts as paramount factors; so we are now in a position to consider the very positive suggestions of Jeans, Max Planck, de Broglie and Schrodinger.

Sir James Jeans says:

> 'The Universe begins to look more like a Great Thought than a Great Machine. Mind no longer appears as an Accidental Intruder into the Realms of Matter. We are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the Creator and Governor of the Realms of Matter.'[20]

He elsewhere says:

'It may well be, it seems to me, that

13 Butler: ibid., pp. 65-7.

14 Butler: ibid.

15 Sherrington, Sir Charles: *Man on His Nature* (Cambridge University Press, 1940), p. 357.

16 ibid.

17 Schrodinger, E.: op. cit., pp. 50-1.

18 Eccles, John C.,: op. cit.

19 Schrodinger, E: loc. cit.

20 Jeans, Sir James: *The Mysterious Universe* (The University Press, Cambridge, 1930), pp. 148-9.

each individual consciousness ought to be compared to the brain cell in a Universal Mind.... Consciousness is fundamental. The material universe is derivative from consciousness, not conscousness from the material universe.'[21]

Prof. Max Planck says:

'I believe life is a part of some greater life that we cannot understand. . . . I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything we talk about, everything we regard as existing, postulates consciousness.'[22]

Prince de Broglie says:

'I do not see how consciousness can be derived from material things. I regard consciousness and matter as different aspects of the same thing.'[23]

Prof. Erwin Schrodinger writes:

'While the stuff from which our world picture is built is yielded exclusively from the sense organs as organs of the mind, so that every man's world picture is and always remains a construct of his mind and cannot be proved to have any other existence—yet the conscious mind itself remains a stranger within that construct; it has no living space in it; you can spot it nowhere in space.'[24]

He further says:

'The over-all number of minds is just one. I venture to call it indestructible. ... Mind is always now. There is really no before and after for mind. There is only a now that includes memories and expectations. But I grant that our language is not adequate to express this, and I also grant . . . that I am now talking religion, not science—a religion, however, not opposed to science, but supported by what disinterested scientific research has brought to the fore.'[25]

21 Sullivan, J.W.N.: *Contemporary Mind* (Humphrey Toulin, London, 1934), pp. 132-3.

22 ibid., pp. 151-2.

23 ibid., p. 164.

24 Schrodinger, E: op. cit., p. 44.

25 Schrodinger: op. cit., p. 62.

Joad criticised science for omitting mind.[26] He also points out[27] that both Einstein and Schrodinger hold the same views as Planck.[28] The use of the expression 'Universal Mind' in the writings of Jeans is most noteworthy. The idea of a 'Cosmic Mind' as conceived by Wood Jones[29] and by Lowson[30] is equally startling. Prof. Lowson says:

'So far as scientific inference can guide us we must conclude that "in the beginning", when time for our universe began, the fundamental entities—neutrons, positrons, electrons, protons—were formed in a vast indefinite expanse of ether, which may be regarded as the real existence immediately behind phenomena and as consisting of cosmic energy directed and controlled by cosmic mind.'[31]

Prof. Mottram writes: 'So I throw out the suggestion that the real "I", the core of our being, is a spark, an atom of the fundamental reality of the universe.[32]

Sherrington says:

'Man's mind is a recent product of our planet's side. . . . Life is being evolved without pause. Our planet in its surround has evolved it and is evolving it. And with it evolves mind. . . . Always so far as we know the finite mind is attached to a running energy-system. When that energy-system ceases to run what of the mind which runs with it? Will the universe which elaborated and is elaborating the finite mind then let it perish?'[33]

26 Joad, C.E.M.: *Philosophy for Our Times* (Thomas Nelson, London, 1940).

27 Joad, C.E.M.: *Guide to Modern Thought* (Faber and Faber, London, 1933), p. 96.

28 Sullivan, J.W.N.: op. cit.

29 Jones Wood: *Design and Purpose* (Kegan Paul, London, 1942).

30 Lowson, J.: *Science and Reality* (Watts, London, 1936), p. 61.

31 ibid.

32 Mottram, V. H.: *The Physical Basis of Personality* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1944).

33 Sherrington; op. cit., pp. 218, 232.

If mind is the 'Creator and governor of the realms or matter', then mind is 'energy' and the Universal Mind is the Supreme Motive Power in the Universe. Universal Mind is the source of all knowledge. We can recognize the Universal Mind under such a title as the Cosmic Mind, the Architect of the Universe, the Creator, the Fundamental Reality, and these all are variants of the same idea.

Many scientists of repute have concluded that (*a*) matter is a derivative of consciousness, (*b*) each individual consciousness is comparable to a brain cell in a Universal Mind, and (*c*) we cannot get behind Universal Mind. C.E. Last concludes:

> 'We must regard the individual mind as being a phenomenon, something which is continuously arriving out of the incomprehensible "not anywhere"; something which is vested with energy, and is continuously arriving out of the "not anywhere"'.

He further says:

> 'If we can conceive a Universal Mind, all minds will have a common origin, and each individual mind will stand in relationship to every other mind; each individual mind will carry a latent and inherent capacity for response, not only to every other individualized mind, but also to the universal mind.'

He suggests:

> 'When mind is disembodied—or perhaps it would be better to say "externalized"—it would, like energy, become a form of radiation.'[34]

Our Ignorance

The desperate state of our ignorance has been brought home to us by many other eminent scientists. Eddington says:

> 'It is often one of naive *surprise* that Nature should have hidden her fundamental secrets successfully from such powerful intellects as ours. . . . Our ignorance stands before us, appalling and insistent.'[35]

Albert Einstein says:

> 'A human being is a part of the whole, called by us as "Universe", a part limited in time and space'. . . . 'We know nothing about it (the nature of God and the Universe) at all. Our knowledge is but the knowledge of schoolchildren. . . . Possibly, we shall know a little more than we do now. But the real nature of things—that we shall never know, never.'[36]

Bernard Lovell says:

> 'The human brain is endowed with the remarkable power to understand so much about the universe. Today it begins to appear that our present complexities arise because we still understand so little of the totality.'[37]

Ramanujan, the great Indian mathematical genius, was once going in a tramcar to Triplicane, a part of Madras City. The driver was alternately accelerating the speed or applying the brakes with gusto. Ramanujan burst out, 'See how that man is imagining that he has the power to go slow or fast at his pleasure. He forgets that he gets the power through the current that flows in the overhead wires, which is not visible to him unless he tries to see it. That is how "maya" works in this world.'[38] We are ignorant of the mechanism of this flow of power.

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34 Last, C. E.: *Man in the Universe* (Werner Laurie, 1954), pp. 142-4.

35 Eddington, A.S.: op. cit., p. 178,

36 *Reader's Digest,* July 1973 (Indian edn), pp. 133-4.

37 Lovell, Sir Bernard: *Science Journal,* October 1966, 2, No. 10, p. 40.

38 Ranganathan, S. R.: *RAMANUJAN The Man and the Mathematician* (Asia Publishing House, Madras, 1967), p. 89.

(*To be concluded*)

FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA: BABURAM GHOSH

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

Baburam Ghosh, later known as Swami Premananda, belonged to the select group of half a dozen disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, whom the latter referred to as *īśvarakotis*, Godlike souls. Born on 10 December 1861 in the village of Antpur, Hooghly district, Baburam was brought up in a noble and pious family. Devotion to God was a family trait, which Baburam inherited and cultivated notably.

After completing his elementary studies at the village school, Baburam came to Calcutta for higher studies. He joined the Aryan School for some time and then entered the Metropolitan Institution near Shyampukur, where Mahendranath Gupta—later the celebrated author of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* served as headmaster. It was there that Baburam made the acquaintance of Rakhal (later Swami Brahmananda) who happened to read in the same class. Soon they became fast friends. About this time Rakhal had come under the benign influence of Sri Ramkrishna and had begun visiting the Dakshineswar temple.

Baburam's sister Krishnabhavini's marriage to Balaram Bose of Calcutta brought the family under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna. It is probable that it was through Balaram Bose that Baburam first heard about Ramakrishna. Balaram's elder brother Tulsiram had visited Sri Ramakrishna in the company of Balaram and, knowing of the religious temperament of Baburam, had suggested that the latter visit the saint of Dakshineswar. The saint, Tulsiram said, would lose physical consciousness on hearing the name of God, as was the case with Caitanyadeva. Soon after this conversation Baburam, by sheer chance, happened to see Sri Ramakrishna for the first time in a 'Hari sabhā' (a Vaiṣṇava assembly for hearing scripture-readings) at Jorasanko.[1] Baburam had gone there to hear the reading from the holy *Bhāgavata*. Probably he had gone there in the company of his friend Ramdayal Chakraborty, who lived in Balaram Bose's house.

It was an afternoon probably in spring. Baburam saw Sri Ramakrishna in the audience. Baburam noticed that a group of devotees, who were sitting very close to Sri Ramakrishna, were listening with rapt attention to whatever occasionally came from his lips. Ramakrishna's brief commentaries on what the scholar was reading were illuminating. At one stage Baburam was struck with wonder—for Sri Ramakrishna sat motionless. He seemed to be oblivious of the outer world. He seemed not even to breathe. His face was brightened by a bewitching smile. It seemed he was beholding a wonderful vision. His companion told Baburam that Sri Ramakrishna was in *samādhi*. He continued in that state for a long time.[2] The sight of the *samādhi* of the holy man, and his sweet words, left an indelible impression on Baburam's mind. He returned home that evening curious to know more about Sri

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1 According to Vaikunthanath Sanyal (*Śrī-Śrī-Rāmakṛṣṇa-Līlāmṛta*, p. 308), Baburam saw the Master first at Balaram Bose's residence. Among other sources however, consult *The Disciples of Ramakrishna* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, 1943), p. 198; and Gurudas Burman: *Śrī-Rāmakṛṣṇa-Carit* (Pub. by Kalinath Sinha, 13 Nikasipara Lane, Calcutta), Vol. I, pp. 264-5, where Baburam's meeting the Master at Jorasanko Hari-sabhā has been beautifully described.

2 Swami Nityatmananda: *Śrī-Ma Darśana* (General Printers and Publishers, 119 Dharmatolla Street, Calcutta 13), Vol. IV, p. 118.

Ramakrishna. Baburam was then living in a hired house at Combulitola, Calcutta.

Next day Baburam when he met Rakhal in the school broached the subject. He said, 'Well, is there a holy man living at Dakshineswar ?'

Rakhal: 'Yes, would you like to pay him a visit ? '

Baburam: 'Oh, yes. Have you seen him ? What kind of a man is he ? '

Rakhal: 'Yes, I have met him. Why do you not go there one day and see for yourself ? '

Baburam: 'Well, is he the same person who yesterday attended the reading from the *Bhāgavata* at Pal's residence in Jorasanko ? '

Rakhal: 'Quite probably. He visits any place where a discourse on God is held. Would you like to visit him next Saturday ? '

Baburam was willing.

The two of them left for Dakshineswar the following Saturday after school hours. It was probably April 8, 1882.[3] It was a chance coincidence that Ramdayal Chakraborty, who used to visit Sri Ramakrishna, joined them at Ahiritola where they took a boat for Dakshineswar. Ramdayal was carrying with him food for Sri Ramakrishna.

On the way Rakhal inquired of Baburam if he would like to spend the night at Dakshineswar. Baburam, thinking that the holy man lived in a small hut, said apprehensively, 'Will there be accommodation for us ? '

'There might be,' answered Rakhal.

'What shall we eat at night ? Is there an eating-house ? ' asked Baburam.

Smilingly Rakhal said, 'We shall manage somehow.'

It was sunset when the party arrived at Dakshineswar. The crimson sky was reflected in the blue water of the river. The tall steeple of the Kālī temple, fenced, as it were, by a dozen Śiva temples on the bank of the Gaṅgā, was an impressive sight. The newcomer was fascinated by the beauty and serene atmosphere of the place.

Instead of going round the temples first they went straight to Sri Ramakrishna's room, but he was not to be found there. Rakhal at once sensed where he might be. He excused himself and went in search of the Master. In a few minutes he returned, leading by the hand Sri Ramakrishna, who was in a state of God-intoxication. Rakhal was directing his footsteps, warning him of the high and low places. Entering the room, Sri Ramakrishna, still in an abstracted mood, took his seat on the small couch and gradually returned to consciousness of the outer world.

The new arrival regarded the saint for a few moments in silence. Sri Ramakrishna was then about fortysix, a man of medium height, somewhat thin ; he appeared to be

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[3] Gurudas Burman (ibid., p. 268) states that this visit was in the month of Caitra (March-April). Swami Saradananda in *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-4, 1956, p. 744) says, 'Swami Premananda came for the first time to the Master shortly after Narendra had come to be with him.' Narendra first came in November 1881 (ibid., p. 715).

Again, 'M' in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1947), p. 55, says, 'Baburam had seen him [the Master] only once or twice.' (Dated Oct. 22, 1882)

According to Manadasankar Dasgupta: *Yugābatār Śrī-Rāmakṛṣṇa*, p. 373, it was the month of Bhādra-Āśvin (September); and several well-known recent authors have given conflicting dates: e.g., *Swami Premananda—Teachings and Reminiscences* (Ed. & Tr. by Swami Prabhavananda, Pub. by Advaita Ashrama, 1970), p. 5, 'November 1882'; *Swami Premananda*, by Swami Ashokananda, (Vedanta Society of Northern California, 1970) p. 4, 'autumn of 1882'. However, weighing the available evidence, with due preference for the earlier and authoritative manuscripts listed first, we conclude that this visit occurred one Saturday in the month of Caitra 1882. The date was probably April 8th.

very simple and unassuming. The most impressive thing about him was his face which always beamed with the radiance of inner joy.

Sri Ramakrishna inquired about the new arrival and Ramdayal introduced him. This gladdened the Master, as it appeared from his expression. He said, 'Ah, so you are a relative of Balaram! Then you are related to us also. Very good. Where is your home?'

Baburam: 'Tara Antpur, sir.'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Is that so? Then I have visited your village once. Do Kalu and Bhulu of Jhamapukur belong to that village?'

Surprised at hearing the names of his two maternal uncles, Baburam said, 'Yes, sir; but how do you know them?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'They are the two sons of Ramprasad Mitra. When I lived at Jhamapukur I used to visit the house of Digambar Mitra and also theirs.'

Though Baburam was a little over twenty, he looked not more than fifteen years of age. Nevertheless his calm nature and gentle conduct made him very appealing to all.[4]

Sri Ramakrishna then caught hold of Baburam's hand and said, 'Come closer to the light. Let me see your face.' He took him near the earthen lamp and in its dim light carefully scrutinized his features. It seemed that Sri Ramakrishna was satisfied with the examination, for he exclaimed in approbation, 'Good, good!' Next he said, 'Let me see your hand.' He weighed the young man's forearm by placing it on his palm. Satisfied with these physical tests, Sri Ramakrishna said, 'Good, that's all right.' As physical characteristics can be a strong indication of a man's mental propensities and spiritual potentialities, Sri Ramakrishna used to employ such tests to find out the strong past impressions of a newcomer.[5] The examinee years later wrote in a letter:

> 'Thakur (Ramakrishna) used to accept disciples after testing them in many ways: . . . He was versed in physiognomy and so he used to examine the shape of his disciple's eyes, hands, feet and so forth. He knew different ways to judge if one were truly a spiritual aspirant.'

No doubt Sri Ramakrishna had had previous knowledge of Baburam's coming as well as of his spiritual stature. Once the Master remarked that Śrī Rādhā, the Goddess of Love, Herself was partially incarnated in him. Sri Ramakrishna later said also: '. . . . In a vision I saw Baburam as a goddess with a necklace around her neck and with woman companions about her. He has received something in a dream. His body is pure. Only a very little effort will awaken his spiritual consciousness.'[6]

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4 Swami Ashokananda (op. cit., p. 3) thus describes the mature Premananda: 'He was very straight—straight as an arrow. He was not very tall . . . probably he was about five feet eight—and he was rather slim. . . . His complexion was pure gold—you have never seen such a complexion. When he was in an ecstatic mood, which was most of the time, his face and the upper part of his body had a sheen of fire through this gold; it was the most wonderful thing to see.'

5 Saradananda: op. cit., pp. 768-9: 'As soon as someone came to him, the Master, we saw, looked at him in a peculiar way. If . . . [he were favourably impressed, then during future] visits to him, he engaged himself in coming to a sure conclusion regarding the dormant spiritual tendencies in him by observing minutely, without his knowledge, the form of the limbs of his body, his mental tendencies, the intensity of his desire for enjoyment, especially his attachment to lust and gold, as also how far his mind had been . . . attracted towards him. He gathered his data by observing how he talked, worked and behaved. . . . Afterwards if it were at all necessary to know anything deeply hidden in his mind, the Master knew it with the help of his subtle Yogic insight.'

6 *Gospel*, p. 411.

About the young man's moral character Sri Ramakrishna affirmed, 'Baburam is pure to his very marrow. No impure thought can ever cross his mind.'[7] Thus on ascertaining the new arrival's spiritual nature, Sri Ramakrishna, as was his wont, developed a special relation of love with him from the very beginning and he always maintained that relation intact.

Next turning to Ramdayal Sri Ramakrishna said, 'Do you know how Naren is? I heard he was not keeping well.'

Ramdayal: 'He is all right now, I hear.'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Look, he has not come here for a long time. I feel a great longing to see him. Please ask him to come here one day. You will remember, won't you?'

Ramdayal: 'Surely, I shall remember. I shall ask him positively.'

Then as Baburam later recounted, 'a few hours were delightfully spent in religious talks', the details of which are not available. It was about ten o'clock. Sri Ramakrishna ate a very little of the large quantity of food which Ramdayal had brought. The rest was distributed among the three visitors. Supper over, Sri Ramakrishna asked them whether they would like to sleep in his room or outside.

Rakhal chose the room; Ramdayal wanted his bed to be spread on the veranda. Baburam chose to join Ramdayal, for he thought that his presence inside the room might disturb Sri Ramakrishna. The latter again requested them to sleep inside his room but they declined. Baburam and Ramdayal lay down on the eastern veranda. As it was almost summer, the night was neither cold nor warm. They soon fell asleep.

After about an hour the exchange of messages between the night guards woke Baburam up. Presently he saw a most unusual thing. Sri Ramakrishna approached them reeling like a drunkard with his cloth under his arm. Addressing Ramdayal he said, 'Hullo, are you asleep?'

Ramdayal: 'No, sir.'

Sri Ramakrishna said, his voice trembling with anguish: 'Please tell him to come once. I feel as though someone were wringing my heart like this.' And he twisted the cloth (taking it from under his arm) as though wringing water from it. His every gesture expressed the agony of his heart for Narendranath. Ramdayal, familiar with the childlike simplicity of the Master, consoled him in various ways and assured him saying: 'I shall see him tomorrow morning and request him see you. I shall let him know that you are extremely anxious for him.'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Oh, yes! My mind is quite disurbed for his sake. Meet him and ask him to come.'

Ramdayal assured him: 'As soon as morning comes, I shall call on him. Please don't worry. He is all right. He will surely come as soon as he hears of your anxiety.'

'What love, what anguish this holy man bears for Narendra!' Baburam thought to himself. 'But how queer it is that Narendra does not respond.'[8]

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7 Part of a conversation between 'M' and the Master (*Gospel*, p. 443) will further illustrate the Master's opinion:

'Yesterday I came to know Baburam's inner nature. That is why I have been trying so hard to persuade him to live with me. The mother bird hatches the egg in proper time. Boys like Baburam are pure in heart. They have not yet fallen into the clutches of "women and gold". Isn't that so? . . .

'They are like a new pot. Milk kept in it will not turn sour.

'I need Baburam here. I pass through certain spiritual states when I need someone like him.'

8 Later Swami Premananda used to say: 'What love can I give you? Not one-hundredth part of the love that we received from Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna moved a few steps towards his room but only to return to Ramdayal and say, 'Then tell him, ask him to come one day.' He repeated these words and went back to his bed with staggering steps. After about an hour he reappeared; this time he seemed to be even more intoxicated, and said: 'Look, Naren is as pure as Nārāyaṇa Himself. I cannot bear life without him. The pain of his separation is so excruciating that I feel as if my heart were being sequeezed like this.' He again demonstrated the anguish of his heart by twisting his cloth. He could hardly control himself. Again, he said, 'I am being put on the rack as it were, for his sake. Let him come here just once.' This episode was repeated at almost hourly intervals throughout the night.[9] Of course Baburam and Ramdayal could not sleep while they saw this drama going on.

Early next morning Baburam found Sri Ramakrishna a different man. He was seated in his room, his face peaceful and serene, a marked contrast to what had been seen the night before. Sri Ramakrishna asked him to go round the Panchavati. As he walked towards the spot, he was amazed to find that the Panchavati closely tallied with the day-dreams of his boyhood.[10] The sight of the grove along with the hut seemed quite familiar to him. He, however, kept this to himself and returned to Sri Ramakrishna. In answer to the latter's queries he only said that it was nice. The Master then bade him visit the Kālī temple. He did so and came back to take leave. He took the dust of the Master's feet and was about to leave when Sri Ramakrishna with his characteristic bewitching smile, said. 'Will you not come again?' Baburam agreed and started for Calcutta leaving behind Rakhal, who was to stay with the Master. The visit had been memorable. Sri Ramakrishna had said something, done something, the details of which Baburam could not explain, but it had made an indelible impression on him, like the shining full moon that you never forget, once seen. Sri Ramakrishna appeared to him as the embodiment of sweetness itself.[11]

The story continues that Baburam came to Dakshineswar the next Sunday and found that Narendra, Rakhal and others were having a picnic under the Panchavati. Baburam was introduced to Narendra. Narendra's versatile talents and lovable disposition quickly won Baburam's admiration.

Visits followed visits to Dakshineswar and, soon after, Baburam, despite all remonstrances, began finding school and family life insipid and uninteresting. Sri Ramakrishna's parental affection loomed large on the mental horizon of the young man. He was overwhelmed by the saint's affectionate treatment. Later he said, 'He (Sri Ramakrishna) was the embodiment of kindness. I fail to measure the bound of his grace.' No less impressed was he by the self-surrender of the saint; for he said later, 'He (Sri Ramakrishna) had given the

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Oh, how he loved us!' (*Swami Premananda—Teachings and Reminiscences*, p. 139)

Again he said: 'I have been made a bond servant by the love of Sri Ramakrishna; by his love he made all of us bond servants. He was love inside and outside. Even his rebukes stemmed from his love.' (ibid., p. 51)

9 This is according to the account of the episode given by Gurudas Burman: op. cit., pp. 268-70.

10 *vide The Disciples of Ramakrishna*, p. 197: At eight years his ideal was to lead a life of renunciation with a fellow monk in a hut shut out from the public view by a thick wall of trees.' See also, p. 201.

11 Swami Premananda's letter of 23/6/1914 (*Teachings and Reminiscences*, pp. 221-2): 'Our Lord, from the very beginning of his life until its end, manifested only sweetness in his divine play. He never dispayed any supernatural powers.... Thakur's divine play, from the first to the last, is a play in which was manifest only sweetness; he was the embodiment of sweetness.'

Divine Mother the power of attorney just as Girish Babu gave him his power of attorney.'[12] Slowly the idea began to dawn on him that his relation with Sri Ramakrishna was not of this life alone, but dated from a remote existence. He felt in his heart of hearts that he belonged to the Master.[13] He longed to live with him. At last an opportune episode settled things for him. One day when his mother, who herself was greatly devoted to Sri Ramakrishna, came to see the latter, he requested her to leave her son with him. The devoted mother happily gave her ungrudging consent. From this time onward Baburam began to live with the Master constantly. Some years later, on taking monastic vows, he came to be known as Swami Premananda, the name meaning literally, 'the bliss of ecstatic love'. Still later on, when Swami Premananda became known to a wide circle of devotees, they did find this bliss manifest in him. The devotees discovered that the Swami possessed nothing, wanted nothing for himself, for he was full of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda.

[12] Swami Premananda: *Śrī-Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇadeva* (Bengali), 3rd Edition.

[13] He wrote to Swami Abhedananda on 15/8/1915 (*Teachings and Reminiscences*, p. 194): 'Do you remember when you and I were together at the Cossipore garden house, and the Master remarked, "Your relationship is between Self and Self." ... Brother, always remember we are monkeys and he is holding us in his palm. In his divine incarnation as Rama, we had tails; this time the only difference is that we are bereft of tails.'

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Our readers will find a little change in the caption of the first-page matter, but a great change in its contents. 'Sri Ramakrishna Answers', which appeared for exactly four years from July 1970, has helped many a spiritual seeker in finding a way out of the welter of spiritual doubts. Judging from the readers' appreciative reactions, we confidently feel that the column has more than amply served its purpose.

But spiritual life passes through many stages, one of the earliest being the stage of doubts and questionings. As the aspirant's purity and power of subtle perception increase, as his love and yearning for God grow, an altogether new and different order of reality than the physical and sensual—or for that matter the merely psychological—begins to unfold. Visions and voices, ecstasies and luminous perceptions may begin to be experienced; and to such sincere seekers these invariably mark advanced stages in the spiritual journey. That such supersensuous experiences occur in the lives of those who have devotedly followed their disciplines over a long enough period, is attested by the mystical literature—the sayings and life-accounts of the saints—both in the East and the West. Such records hold a twofold benefit for the spiritual seeker: they inspire his flagging spirits with fresh hopes and zeal; they also validate and confirm his own experiences. A qualitative and quantitative distinction, however, has to be made between the spiritual perceptions, experiences, and realizations of those who are hailed as avatars or incarna-

tions of God, and those of other seekers and saints.

Sri Ramakrishna—'the king of the realm of spiritual sentiment', 'one spray' from whose 'ocean of spirituality, if realized, will make gods of men', as Swami Vivekananda remarked—often spoke about himself, his spiritual struggles and experiences; and these statements have been carefully noted down by his disciples and passed on to posterity. Readers of Swami Saradananda's *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master* and Mahendranath Gupta's *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* will have noted that most of these statements are found spread out through those two works. We propose to bring these to our readers in this new serial in as chronological an order as we can. We hope they will be read with as much interest and benefit as the Great Master's 'Answers' have been.

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References: First reminiscence: *The Great Master*, 1952, p. 49; Second: *Gospel*, 1947, p. 305; Third: *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* (Advaita Ashrama, 1964), p. 20; Fourth: *Gospel*: p. 177; Fifth: *Gospel*, p. 768.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from *The Complete Works*, Volume IV (1962), pp. 126–7.

Without that rare class of men who break the bonds of illusion by realizing their spiritual nature and who thus become pillars of light to guide others to that divine destination, humanity would have remained in eternal infancy. Inspiring profiles of such men of illumination are frequently found in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. One such occurs at the end of the second chapter. As it is not easy to describe the sage's enlightened perception, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in one verse, employs a paradoxical statement. The *Editorial* of the month presents an approach to understanding of this statement.

'Religion, Socialism, and Service', by Rev. Swami Vireswaranandaji, President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, is the benedictory address which the Swamiji gave on May 4, this year, at the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Ramakrishna Mission Centre in Bombay. With incisive citations from Swami Vivekananda, Swami Vireswaranandaji here urges our countrymen to make religion the basis and core of all reformative and reconstructive programmes and activities which are being vigorously worked out in India. Incidentally he points out how the Ramakrishna Mission is trying in its modest way to translate the twin ideals of renunciation and service into practical life.

A prophet of Swami Vivekananda's stature and power, vision and breadth, belongs not to any particular race or nation but to the whole world. He is as much eastern as he is western. On his way back from his first visit to the West, he wrote to an American friend, as the ship neared Port Said: 'Once more Asia. What am I? Asiatic, European or American? I feel a curious medley of personalities in me.' Yes, he belongs to all nations and races, and his message is relevant for all times.

In 'Vivekananda Through The Eyes of Western Devotees', Marie Louise Burke gives a devoted analysis of how Swami Vivekananda, by his life and message of strength, self-confidence, rationality and Self-realization, appeals to westerners and particularly to Americans. The author is well known to readers of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, through her articles and two books, on 'New Discoveries' concerning Swami Vivekananda's first and second visits to the West. The present article is the text of her address at the

evening meeting this January 14 at Belur Math, Howrah, West Bengal, to commemorate Vivekananda's birthday.

In the teachings given out by Sri Ramakrishna and his great disciples, we find frequent references to the *kuṇḍalinī*—the infinite power lying 'coiled up' in all beings—and the means of rousing it. Though *rāja-yoga* advocates *prāṇāyāma* (control of *prāṇa* through breathing exercises) as an efficient means to this end, Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples did not favour it much. On the other hand, they advocated purity of conduct and devotion to God, yearning and steadfastness as the safest and surest means. This month, in his 'Essay on Applied Religion', Swami Budhananda discusses this theme through relevant quotes from Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples.

To all those who are acquainted with the cosmological and psychological concepts of Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Vedānta systems, the modern physicist's discoveries and deductions about the nature of the physical world and the 'recording and interpreting' mind seem like echoes only. Physicists like Schrodinger have acknowledged and boldly drawn the attention of others to this fact. Comparative and critical studies of some of the basic conclusions of Vedānta and modern physics have been made and published from time to time. Some studies in the synthesis of these two thought-streams have also been successfully attempted. In 'Mind and Matter' Dr. Sampooran Singh, M.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc., Director, Defence Laboratory, Jodhpur, presents one such synthesis. In this first instalment of his paper, he presents the physicist's concept of mind and matter based on authentic writings and statements of some of the greatest names in the field of modern physics.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE MAHABHARATA: By Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, Published by The Samskrita Academy, Madras, 1973, pp. 71, Price Rs. 3/-

This small book consists of the Sri K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar Endowment Lecture delivered by Sri Masti Venkatesa Iyengar in the Samskrita Academy, Madras. Although the book is the reprint of a lecture, it is one of the most lucid, succinct and critical of recent studies of the *Mahabharata*.

Sri Iyengar has dealt with the *Mahabharata* under four heads: its structure, its episodes, the story and the characters, and the teachings. Under these heads, the learned author has made a very rare and critical analysis of the Epic, from historical and literary standpoints. What was the origin of the *Mahabharata*, where exactly Vyasa comes in, what are the different meanings and significance of the episodes, what do the characters stand for and signify, and lastly the eternal values in the teachings of the Epic—all are dealt with in the most scholarly and thoroughgoing manner. In delivering this address the author has cited from the original *Mahabharata* at many places.

As a useful aid in any critical appraisal of the *Mahabharata*, the book fills a real need.

Dr. Paresh Nath Mukherjee

NEWS AND REPORTS

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, SHELLA, MEGHALAYA (N. E. INDIA)

The Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Shella, was inaugurated by Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, on March 19, 1974, amidst great enthusiasm. Shella is situated in the foothills of the Khasi and Jaintia ranges, forty kilometres below Cherrapunji, overlooking Bangladesh. By it flows the Shella river whose limpid waters further on cascade into Bangladesh. The Mission Centre was established by Swami Prabhananda (Ketaki Maharaj) in 1924.

Many monks of the Order and hundreds of devotees assembled at the Ashrama premises for the celebration. The President Maharaj performed the opening ceremony of the newly constructed Sri Ramakrishna Temple, and a Prayer Hall seating 500. Villagers coming from different parts of the south Khasi hills, as well as the monks, witnessed the ceremony. Special *pujas* were performed at the new shrine while Vedic hymns were chanted. A large congregation in the Prayer Hall sang devotional songs.

Earlier in the morning a colourful procession with a portrait of Sri Ramakrishna, tastefully decorated, had paraded the village paths amidst loud cheers of 'Glory to Sri Ramakrishna'. At noon there was a community dinner and in the evening there was singing of 'Rama-nama'. The visit of the august Head of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission created a deep spiritual impression and imparted an inspiration unprecedented in the history of this Mission Centre. A Souvenir entitled 'Golden Jubilee, Ramakrishna Mission, Shella', containing articles by distinguished writers and messages by the President Maharaj, the General Secretary of the Math and Mission, the President of India, the Prime Minister of India, was published for the occasion by the Ramakrishna Mission, Cherrapunji.

On March 20 in the afternoon Swami Gokulananda, Secretary of the Cherrapunji Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, read out and explained portions of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* in Khasi language.

On March 21, a public meeting was held in Shella village under the presidentship of Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, in which devotional songs were sung and speeches delivered. Swami Bhuteshanandaji, Asst. General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and Swami Pramathananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Purulia, spoke in English; Sri Philon Singh, Sri Ramananda Roy, and Sri Hem Dutta spoke in Khasi.

The Golden Jubilee celebrations were carried over to the Ramakrishna Mission in Cherrapunji on March 23rd. There in connection with the 139th Birth Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Messing Syiem, Syiem (King) of Cherra, presented an address of welcome to Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, on behalf of the entire people of the Cherra region. He said that the people were very happy that the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was being commemorated in Cherrapunji by all people irrespective of religious affiliation, true to the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna, and that the visit of the President of the Mission to distant Cherrapunji proved the keen interest the Revered Swamiji was taking in the good work of the Mission for the people of the Khasi Hills.

The Anniversary festivities included a long procession, led by monks of the Ramakrishna Order from various Centres and joined in by six thousand people—men, women, and children—from different parts of Khasi and Jaintia Hills, with portraits of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and banners inscribed with maxims on Unity of Religions, Universal Peace and Harmony, etc. The procession wended its way through the streets of Cherra and converged at the Iewrim grounds amidst loud cheers of 'Glory to Sri Ramakrishna' rending the skies over the Cherra hill ranges The President Maharaj, seated on the balcony of the Mission's Industrial and Science Building, delivered his benedictory aldress as follows:

'Friends: It gives me great joy to see you all assembled here, from various villages, to celebrate the birth anniversray of Sri Ramakrishna and to pay your homage to him. You know he was born in a village and that his parents were poor but devout, and that he himself was not an educated person in the modern sense. Yet through earnest spiritual practices he attained God-realization, and today he is regarded in many parts of the world as a spiritual luminary of the first magnitude. He declared to the world that God exists and that He is the only Reality, and that he had realized Him and talked to Him. He affirmed that anyone who has gone through spiritual discipline sincerely, can realize Him here and now. This bold assertion, based on practical experience, gave the required scientific proof to the modern world

which was doubting God's very existence. He also went through the spiritual disciplines prescribed by different religions, and attained the same goal—namely, God-realization—through each. This made him declare that the various religions are but different paths to God-realization. "As many religions, so many paths." Therefore he could not approve any dogmatic belief that one religion was superior to others. It was only our ignorance and bigotry that made us think like that. And for the same reason he did not believe in religious conversion. Sri Ramakrishna asked a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Christian a better Christian, a Muslim a better Muslim, and a Buddhist a better Buddhist. He felt that a mere change of one's religion did not help anyone to realize God. What was necessary was earnest and sincere *sadhana* (spiritual practice). If anyone went through the required spiritual discipline sincerely, according to his own religion, he was sure to attain God-realization—and speedily. This broad message—namely, God is real, and He can be attained through any religion—has caught the imagination of the world; and many thinkers and writers in various countries have referred to his message as having the potentiality of ushering in a new era of peace and harmony. This message has already taken root in many parts of the world, far and near, such as parts of Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, Japan, Australia, South America and the U.S.A., and is still spreading day by day. It is being eagerly received everywhere on account of its appeal to the modern mind with its scientific outlook.'

Concluding, the Swamiji said that he was very happy to be 'here on this occasion as one amongst you and take part in this celebration and pay my homage also to Sri Ramakrishna. May his blessings be on all of us. This is my prayer to him. Khublei! (God bless you!)'

The celebrations included a community dinner for all present followed by a 'Shad Suk Mynsiem' (a kind of annual Khasi dance), which was witnessed by the President Maharaj who also gave prizes to the dancers. The festivities came to a close in the evening after a film show.

The concluding function of the celebrations was on March 25 with a public meeting in the Vivekananda Centenary Hall of Cherrapunji, presided over by Swami Suddhabodhananda, a former head of the Cherrapunji Centre for 24 years. The Chief Guest was Padmashri Dr. Chandran Devanesan, Vice-Chancellor of the North Eastern Hill University. The function started with an opening song by the Khasi school children, and patriotic songs in Khasi led by Sri Govinda Chandra Roy.

Following the welcome and introduction of guests, a variety programme was given by students from the distant village schools of the Ramakrishna Mission. They presented a Khasi dance, a spirited recitation from Swami Vivekananda's works, a Bengali dance by Khasi girls, a Scottish dance, an Action song, and an inspiring Khasi poem paying tribute to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Prabhananda (Ketaki Maharaj) by one of the oldest teachers of the Ramakrishna Mission, Cherrapunji, Sri Dion Roy.

Dr. Devanesan as Chief Guest paid eloquent tribute to the work of the Ramakrishna Mission, with which he has been well acquainted for many years in Madras, and even in the distant Fiji Islands. He said that in these days narrow religious attitudes were outmoded, and urged people to cultivate the universalism of religious outlook and harmony which were among the basic teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Dr. Devanesan then referred to the kind of education being imparted in the Ramakrishna Mission schools of Cherra, and said he was very pleased to find there a stress on handicrafts and vocations, in addition to academic subjects. The Khasis, he said, should try to develop their scientific spirit to help the growth and development of their own state and its resources. He emphasized that the Khasi students should not only develop their own culture but also contribute their quota to the national culture and imbibe the best from the other parts of India.

Prof. Kapila Chatterji then spoke on the good work of the Ramakrishna Mission in these hills, and called on the Khasi youths to come forward and take up the task of serving the people in a spirit of dedication and selflessness.

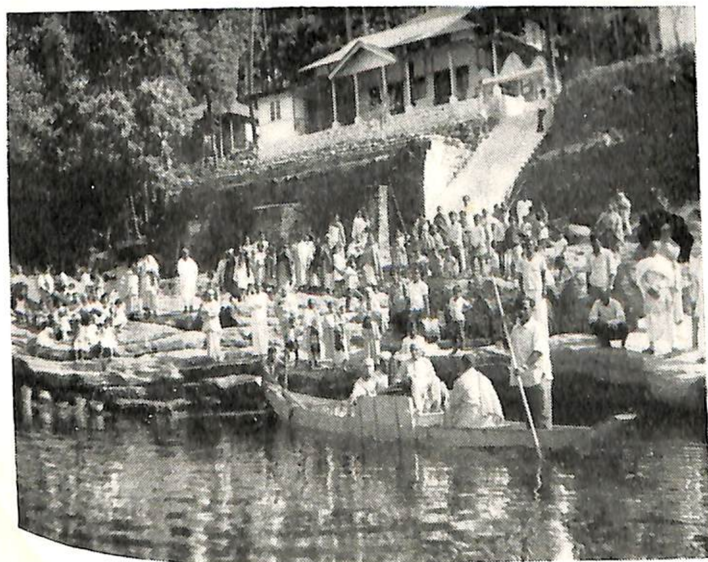
In his presidential address, Swami Suddhabodhananda said that he was happy to find that this centre of the Ramakrishna Mission was progressing steadily and leading the tribal people along the paths of progress and national unity. He emphasized that the teachings of Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda should be practised by the people to develop the scientific outlook and a broad vision for the growth of the nation and uplift of the tribal people to equality with the more advanced sections of the Indian people.



New Temple and Ashrama from the Shella river



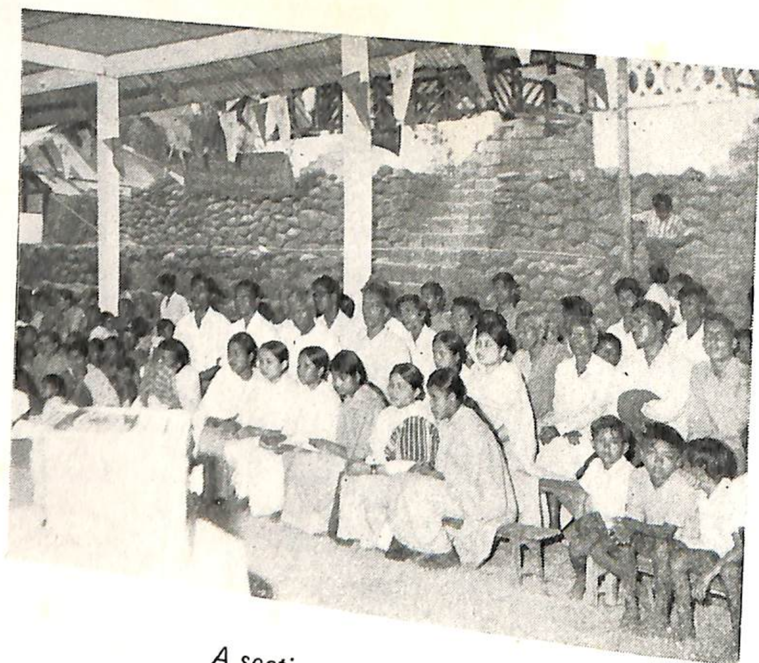
Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj in meditation at the shrine of the new temple of the Shella Ashrama



Swami Vireswaranandaji and others on a boat trip (Shella Ashrama in the background)



Swami Vireswaranandaji presiding over the public meeting at the Shella Ashrama



A section of the audience at the public meeting

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